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### TLS Crossword No 17

A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct solution opened on February 3. Answers should be addressed to TLS Crossword, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The winner of Crossword No 16 is F. E. Keegan, Mount St Mary's College, Spinkhill, Sheffield S31 9YL.



- Across
- 1 Lake housing upper-class deity. (6)
  - 4 Author handles the introduction badly. (8)
  - 10 Cynara, a tasty dish. (9)
  - 11 Leg an old doctor could mend. (5)
  - 12 A spell and what it's able to do. (7)
  - 13 Severe wind from south-east. (7)
  - 14 Original offspring from transatlantic "fateful" porpoise. (5)
  - 15 Hard-boiled mistress. (8)
  - 16 A bear retreating in China to a eucalyptus tree. (8)
  - 20 Site of Prospero's cell: according to Lawrence. (5)
  - 23 Half-playful sounding-reveiler. (7)
  - 25 Poet's thank-you for hospitality. (7)
  - 26 One of the leading characters in making of Philip Sidney's *Arden*. (5)
  - 27 Injuring passage from Ramsay's anthology. (9)
  - 28 To be still a special agent on track of the Spini. (8)
  - 29 Grocery apprentice's burning pound! (6)
- Down
- 1 Cornelian jewel. (8)
  - 2 Sailors first to abandon ship having swallowed mixed gin. (7)
  - 3 Misrepresenting the Lord in art of teaching? (9)
  - 5 Banham-weight prize-fighter. (3,4,7)
  - 6 Horseless clerk who had seen better days. (5)
  - 7 Painter once filling gap with British at home. (7)
  - 8 Kind of window look-out by Arthurian knight. (6)
  - 9 Writer of *Dolores* and thereafter this and that. (7,7)
  - 16 Negative imperatives updated by Clough. (9)
  - 17 Is indifference Mill's limitation upon Liberty? (8)
  - 19 Holy ground once for Mount's subject. (7)
  - 21 Object to getting into Jani old dress. (7)
  - 22 Eugene is one of the famous three. (6)
  - 24 Mark of the northern constellation. (5)



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# TLS

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## AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 128  
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow, and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than February 17. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers received on that date, or failing that, the most nearly correct.  
Entries, marked 'Author, Author 128', on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX.  
1. We spent Christmas at Boston. It was deep in snow, and everything we touched gave us an electric shock. Flames, blue and red, sprang from keyholes when keys were put into them. David, touching Oberst's forehead to show him where he had a bump, repeated (and communicated) with a shock that his left arm was useless for the rest of the day, and

Oberst gave a piercing howl. I touched nothing excepting through the medium of a glove.  
2. It was a quiet, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York. I'm stupid about executions. . . . It had nothing to do with me, but I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves.

Competition No 125  
Winner: Patricia M. Ball.  
Answers:  
All by Lord Byron.  
1. Letter to Thomas Moore, November 30, 1816.  
2. Letter to John Murray, July 22, 1816.  
3. Letter to Thomas Moore, January 2, 1821.

# Into the Age of Discussion

Alan Ryan

STEFAN COLLINI, DONALD WINCH AND JOHN BURROW  
*The Noble Science of Politics: A study in nineteenth-century intellectual history* 350pp. Cambridge University Press. £25 (paperback, £9.95).

Regarded strictly as a book upon its ostensible subject-matter, *The Noble Science of Politics* is not entirely satisfactory - it is bitingly and stylistically uneven, the degree of seriousness which the various topics under discussion either warrant or receive is too variable for comfort, and the degree of conviction which the authors inspire varies wildly from one topic to another. But it is a tremendously good read, and as a stimulus to thought it is so much more than satisfactory that it could hardly be bettered. If some of the stylistic unevenness is irritating - the sheer noisiness of Stefan Collini's chapter on Mill drowns much of the argument - some of it is not merely inevitable but apt. So different in style, ambition and doctrine were, say, Dugald Stewart on the one hand and Walter Bagehot on the other that any book which tackles both of them may as well be written by more than one author - and all the more so when we have Donald Winch to look after the one and John Burrow to look after the other; and Dr Collini's briskness, too, is exceedingly welcome when it is applied to brightening up the stodginess of Cliffe Leslie, Seeley, and Ashley, and teasing the relentless middle-of-the-roadism of Sidgwick's politics textbooks.

As this may suggest, *The Noble Science of Politics* ranges widely. A quick summary of its contents will suggest both that range and the propagandist purpose behind the book as a whole. The Prologue issues a manifesto in the Cambridge manner. Anyone who wishes to impose a pattern on the development of "political science" which was invisible to those who took part in that development is told off for anachronism-mongering. Misguided people who think that any interesting history of ideas moves from intellectual summit to intellectual summit, from Jeremy Bentham to John Stuart Mill to - well, to nobody in particular, but perhaps to Green or Hobhouse or Wallas at a pinch - are rebuked for failing to see what a great variety of things quite properly counted as "political science" in the nineteenth century. To enforce the point, we begin with the impact of Dugald Stewart on the Edinburgh Reviewers, make our way through the effect on Whig opinion of Malthus's embracing the wrong side in the struggle over the Corn Laws, and are shown some of the ways in which Whigs like Macaulay did not differ from Philosophical Radicals like James Mill. J. S. Mill's failure to discover the principles of "ethology" which were to ground a truly philosophic political science takes us on to the intellectual uplands for a chapter, and an elegant account of Bagehot aptly makes the point that in politics style may be the same thing as content.

Thereafter grittier topics carry us to the end of the book - Stubbs, Freeman and Bryce on the lessons to be drawn from history, especially by a judicious use of "the comparative method"; Sidgwick's solemn employment of "the method of reflective analysis" to end up after 600 pages where the unreflective and unanalytical member of the educated middle class had begun in the first place, and Marshall's rather desperate attempt to work out where in the general scheme of social science economics in particular fitted in. In a dying fall, we are offered a tour of the "political science" syllabus at Cambridge from the establishment of the Moral Sciences Tripos in 1851 to 1910 or so - an exercise which has on me the effect of making me wonder how men like Sidgwick or Oscar Browning or Lewis Dickinson had the nerve or stamina to teach a range of topics which would nowadays be parcelled out among half-a-dozen area specialists. An epilogue points out that nineteenth-century conceptions of political science look pretty quaint today, it's not because political science has become a brown-up subject able to stare nuclear physics in the eye.

Intellectual history conceived as the authors of this book conceive it is essentially opposed to the drawing of morals. Collini, Burrow and

Winch seem to suppose that they are surrounded by historians eager to grade their predecessors for the importance of their contributions to political science as now practised, and thus they aim above everything else to give us a more concrete sense of what people like Malthus, Ricardo, James Mill and the rest thought they were doing at the time they were doing it. This Ranke-like stress on how it really was is sometimes elevated to the methodological rule that we aren't ever allowed to employ hindsight to explain what people were up to, and then it is narrowing and unpersuasive. But done tactfully the attempt to re-create an intellectual milieu and style, and to show just what one's chosen subjects were up to can be extremely enlightening. And it's not as though no large points at all are made.

One which is very well worth recalling is that almost all the writers discussed here were

lines get equally fogged. Macaulay, who denounced Mill's *Essay on Government* as the work of a fifteenth-century Schoolman born out of due season, and complained that its author seemed not to know that governments had anywhere existed among men, was entirely happy with Mill's *History of British India*, which is by no means a work of "inductive" history such as Macaulay's attack on Mill proposes as the basis of political science.

Moreover, Mill and Macaulay reversed positions as soon as they got away from the immediate present. Mill saw the past as a record of gradual emancipation from folly and superstition. He regarded immediate and dramatic political change as quite unproblematic, given the enlightened state of the urban middle classes; but, so far as the remoter future went, the fact was that, as his son observed, he thought human life a pretty poor thing at best, and had



Cruikshank's "The peril of changing the British constitution", 1819, reproduced from Graphic Works of George Cruikshank (168pp. Constable. £5.00 486 23438 X).

no grand vision of a twentieth-century Britain in which science, industry and commerce had conspired to bring 'the common man' an altogether new degree of happiness.

Macaulay, in contrast, thought drastic change was fraught with danger, had a Burkean admiration for the way the heroes of the past had created the British constitution, and the middle rank of society - whose virtues he reckoned in just the same terms as Mill - was altogether too thin on the ground to exercise the untrodden leadership which James Mill expected of it. But, as to the distant future, his hopes were boundless; the land of Cockayne might be built in Britain, as industry and commerce leapt ahead. He was at once more frightened of the plain man as he was and more cheerful about what the plain man might become than either James or John Stuart Mill.

The relationship between "inductive history" and political wisdom was a constant preoccupation of nineteenth-century students of politics. John Stuart Mill, it is true, emphasized the need for a new science of "ethology" - the scientific study of the way people became socialized into their beliefs and allegiances - as the basis of a new and more adequate political science, but the raw materials of that new science could only be provided by history, and the only tests of its maxims when they should be discovered would be provided by history. Although he never made much headway with the subject, it is plain that Mill's confidence in the possibility of developing an appropriate political psychology was increased by Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which was all the more methodologically compelling for being so unselfconscious about its own intellectual techniques.

Less obviously "philosophical" figures than Mill shared his anxiety to bolt science on to history in order to create a new political science. Bagehot almost employs the term "philosophy" as a term of abuse - commonly when he is explaining why some doctrine of Mill's won't quite do, or when he is complaining that a man of Mill's gravitas ought to be less flighty about the basis of political representation. And, as Burrow makes clear, Bagehot's most obvious talent is his sense of the nuances of behaviour which set the successful politician

apart from the failure. Yet, as Burrow also points out, there is Bagehot in *Physics and Politics* trying to explain in evolutionary terms why it is that societies now need order, and now variety and change. *Physics and Politics* is an odd book, and unlike almost everything else of Bagehot's it is rather dull and rather awkwardly written; none the less, it is written with wholly understandable anxieties in mind, and in a framework which was shared with Mill and Maine.

That is, once "the cake of custom" has crumbled, and the "Age of Discussion" is launched, the great fear is that ill-conceived efforts at ameliorating the lot of the poor will lead to a new era of stagnation. The discovery that the plain man is deeply conservative, even if he is also a socialist, was not one which waited upon twentieth-century political sociologists. And Bagehot was as fearful as many liberals have always been of what might happen under the unfettered rule of the majority.

Still, as Burrow says, this isn't the dominant mood; what we rightly remember Bagehot for is the cheerful acceptance of the diversity of political types, the rather knowing and condescending distinction between the "dignified" and the "efficient" elements of the constitution, the deft and tongue-in-cheek defence of "Dull Government". The character emerges by reflection on what it is not; not philosophical, not reverential in the Burkean fashion, not - so far as politics goes - disposed to wishfulness or utopianism. And not, above all, academic.

Whether it was an unmitigated disaster for political science to fall into the hands of professors is an open question; it would certainly be an unmitigated disaster for historians of the subject who were less sprightly than Burrow and Collini. Freeman on comparative government can never have been light reading; a hundred years later, it takes some stamina to tackle him at all, let alone in the company of Bryce and Seeley. But, of course, even if we cannot draw easy or simple morals from the attempt to apply the lessons of the village community or Tacitus' *Germania* to the politics of nineteenth-century Britain, there are some intriguing moments to observe. Freeman's rather romantic liberalism led him to admire the Teutonic gift of liberty, whereas Seeley's imperialism led him instead to denounce "loose talk of liberty" altogether; and one cannot but admire the neatness of Seeley's riposte to Freeman's notion that Britain owed her maritime supremacy to her Anglo-Saxon ancestry - why, he asked, had it taken until the sixteenth century for the Anglo-Saxon affinity with the sea to display itself?

But, there is something of a sense of impending claustrophobia as the story gets towards the end of the century. This may partly be the result of the fading conviction of the writers under discussion that they could either secure the ear of political leaders or would know what to say if they did, and partly the result of at least one of them having no great confidence that it was worth while putting pen to paper at all. In December 1887, Sidgwick wrote to J. A. Symonds: "I am trying to absorb myself in my *Opus Magnum* on Politics. My position is that I seem to myself now to have grasped and analyzed adequately the only possible method of dealing systematically with political problems; but my deep conviction is that it can yield as yet little fruit of practical utility - so doubt whether it is worth while to work it out in a book. Still man must work - and a Professor must write books." Intermittently, *The Elements of Politics* is a good deal better than that might suggest - but only intermittently; and the *The Development of European Politics* is pretty well unreadable. One ought not to gloat or complain; the lesson of the twentieth century is hardly that political science can be scholarly, rigorous, useful and continuously exciting. Indeed, Sidgwick's fear that the line between rather dreary common sense and sheer hot air is a narrow one has been more than justified in the past hundred years.

Such gloomy reflections, however, are not what we get from *The Noble Science of Politics*; its authors are, as they say, intellectual historians, not moralists. They do not tell us to go and do better; they take it for granted that we are bound to go and do different. They deserve our thanks for the verve with which they remind what our predecessors actually did.



# Images of dislocation

## Blake Morrison

JAMES FENTON  
*Children in Exile*  
24pp. Edinburgh: Salamander. £5.  
0 907540 392

MICHAEL HOFMANN  
*Nights in the Iron Hotel*  
48pp. Faber. £4.  
0 571 131166

In his "Manifesto Against Manifestoes" (*Poetry Review*, Volume 73, No 3), James Fenton criticizes those, himself included, who have sloganized and categorized on behalf of contemporary British poetry. "The reality of schools, camps, influences, programmes and manifestoes is grossly exaggerated", he says; and "I hardly think that the distinction between a Martian and a Narrative school can be with substance." Our poetry may have gained more – not least readers – from such distinctions than Fenton admits, but he is right to question whether those readers can be reading properly if their chief concern is to identify a poet's team-colours. What will they make of the eight poems in Fenton's new book, for example, or of the forty in Michael Hofmann's first full-length collection? Fenton's title-poem is narrative of sorts but it also contains images – "The fireflies' brilliant use of the hyphen", pigeons swooping down "after a night on the tiles", "Florence spread like honey on the plain" – that might put it into the school of metaphor. Michael Hofmann's poems are largely episodes and vignettes, but they too use images – a small child like "a gleeful crustacean executing pincer movements", a gymnast swinging "like a hooked fish", a hedgehog "rolled over on its side like a broken castor" – "the primitive roar of a kitchen geyser" – which might pass for the work of Hofmann's editor at Faber, Craig Raine. Story or simile? Clearly such categories will not get us very far in characterizing the work of two such idiosyncratic talents.

Fenton's beautifully produced little book opens with two poems which survey troubled (Third World) landscapes as panoramically as did Auden the troubled (European) landscapes of the 1930s:

Great crowds are fleeing from a major disaster  
Down the long valleys, the greenswallowing winds,  
Down through the beautiful catastrophe of wind.  
("Wind")

I saw that the shanty town had grown over the graves  
and that the crowd lived among the memorials  
That night the city was attacked with rockets.  
("Lines for Translation into any Language")

## Dreaming of France

### Stephen Medcalf

GROFFREY HILL  
*The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy*  
31pp. Agenda Editions/André Deutsch. £3.  
0 233 97549 7

My father in 1915, called up fresh from a London BA in French and English, carried with him the *Chanson de Roland*: in his copy he underlined Gautier's denunciation of versions of the *Chanson* in which "la Patrie et Dieu sont absents". It is that dream of France, almost as much as Charles Péguy, which Geoffrey Hill intends to recover. In his poem, a dream in which Péguy in a Benetton *magasin* plays the part of Joseph the dreamer, exile and provider, and Domremy is restored. The word-paintings of this dream, companions to Hill's former poems on Platonic England, are almost the loveliest thing in the poem, but they are followed by turnings away to Péguy's actual life, the dream which in the rue de la Sorbonne, the Dreyfus affair, Péguy's death in the first battle of the Marne. The poem is a system of checks and balances built up by descriptions of objects laden with human memory, and themselves existing only in Péguy's time, by abrupt shifts whenever a vision or counter-vision becomes too deeply scored, and by following Péguy to keep his distance – both of time and of character, since it is not his charity that is celebrated (the title only suggests a parallel between Hill's relation to Péguy and Péguy's to Joan of Arc in

The view here is so commanding, and the poet so much in command of his material, that it is tempting to suppose that such sombre meditation is all that Fenton does, not merely what he does best. But there are other poems to remind us that he is also an accomplished writer of light verse. "God, A Poem", which depends on a Hardy-like paradox of God existing so as to announce that he does not exist, makes a fine atheistic joke ("Oh he said: 'If you lay off the crumpet/I'll see you alright in the end'"); and "Nothing", though hardly light verse, redeems itself from the hard-done-by, defeatist doggerel it comes close to being by the very stubbornness of its insistence that "Nothing I give [do/say/am] will make you love me more."

But the major work here is without doubt the title poem, where sombreness prevails. It runs to the same sort of middling length as some of Fenton's most successful earlier poems – "Chosun", "A German Requiem" and "A Staffordshire Murderer" – but is clearer, more candid, even rather didactic. It describes a group of Cambodian children, "students of calamity, graduates of famine", who have come to a home in Tuscany, where they are cared for by Americans (liberals who are in their way making amends for "an offence / It took America five years to commit") and embark on the daunting task of familiarizing themselves with European culture ("What is a Pope? What is a proper noun? / Where is Milan? Who won the Second World War?"). The poem does not dwell mawkishly on the children's violent history, but its effects show through in their bad dreams, their fears that the Tuscany forests are full of danger and their growing belief in the superiority of education over property: "if I have knowledge . . . No one can steal that from me." Education is the poem's main theme: we see the children with their "Technical Lego and significant distinctions"; and we also see the narrator, not Yeats's aloof "smiling public man" among school-children but more intimate, with more to learn himself, brought to a richer understanding of the motives and desires of the exile.

He is not alone under the bed then to sleep in the

Better this frost, this blizzard than that sky.  
Better a concert pianist than a corpse, an engineer than

a shadow.  
Better to dance under the fresco than to die.

Over such a distance (fifty quatrains, rhyming *abcb*), it would be surprising if there were not moments when the poet's concentration seems to flag. Some of the epithets – "treacherous waters", "threatened extinction" – come closer to cliché than even an overly accessible poem might want. The lines "I love this valley,

but I often wonder why / There's always one bend extra in the road" seem a near-whimsical superfluity, with that "often" uneasily close to "always" in the next line. The description of one boy being "Greedy for school, frantic to be in there" (my italics) looks more contrived (and rhyme-fulfilling) on the page than Fenton makes it sound when reading it aloud. But these are tiny jolts: there are remarkably few interruptions to the poem's steady "unfurling" and to the humane intelligence which it has to offer. Even a passage about a dog, Duschko, he of little faith, can confront us with a wise and moving reflection:

He thought there was a quantum of love and attention  
Which now he would be forced to share around  
As first three Vietnamese and then four Cambodians  
Trespassed on his ground.  
It doesn't work like that. It never has done.  
Love is accommodating. It makes space.

When Michael Hofmann's poems began to appear three or four years ago, they were immediately recognized as fresh, original, free from the derivative common to most poets in their early twenties. By now some of the novelty has worn off, and run together as a book the poems perhaps make less impact than they do individually in magazines. Influences, mostly Faber ones (Lowell, Muldoon, Paulin), are more apparent: the jokey surrealism of "1967-71" and "Alone" (neither, sadly, reprinted from Faber's *Poetry Introduction* 5) has given way to something less wayward but also less arresting. Youthfulness shows through in the prevalence of *hommages* to artists, Romantic poets, even (most embarrassingly) a former schoolteacher. Above all, the flat, laconic tone of voice, rarely rhyming, never getting above itself as it ranges over the minutiae of the contemporary world – vacuum cleaners, sex shops, DIY centres, toilets for the disabled, "Beatlemania, mini-skirts, glue-sniffing, / Snuff movies", straw hats ("The kind that donkeys wear on the beach"), T-shirts, soda-water. Boots hair-setting gel, "spark plugs mixing with tampons in your handbag" – can begin to seem too relentlessly prosaic: there are no lift-offs, cadences, shivers down the spine.

*Nights in the Iron Hotel* is none the less an impressive first collection, one of the most promising to appear so far this decade. Shifting between the Germany he came from and the England he lives in, taking in Ireland, Czechoslovakia and the Netherlands *en route*, Hofmann has a strong feeling for dislocation, both in people (there are recurrent glimpses of middle-class couples, both young and old, "in a hotel in a foreign country / where the morals are different") and in places: "Furth i. Wald",

for example, shows an Audenesque fascination with border-towns:

These strips of towns, with their troubled histories,  
they are lost in the words like Hansel and Gretel.  
Closures of peace conferences, they changed hands  
so often, they became indistinguishable, worthless.  
Polyglot and jugged like Belgium, each of them  
a spare name in the other language to fall back on.

Hofmann is also fascinated by films and television. "Dependants", which quietly links the lonely narrator-spectator with the woman-starved inmates of a prison movie, is evidently based on *Brute Force* (1947), starring Burt Lancaster; "Entropy (The Late Show)" compares the use of the split screen by early Soviet pioneers with its use today in television coverage of darts, the players "standing like stars" on one side, the board on the other; and a reference to "the rare Ava Gardner, the last woman alive / Modelling her cheek workouts in *On the Beach*" is part of Hofmann's way, filtered contribution, in "Shapes of Things", to the literature of nuclear war. But the influence of film goes deeper than that. Into Hofmann's technique, with its rapid cutting between subjects and its skill at making surprising connections.

The book's opening lines – "Having your photograph on my bedside table / is like having a propeller there" – alert us to an interest in unlikely "correspondences", which recurs later and more successfully in "Hausfrauenger", where a jealous wife is advised to grant her adulterous husband "a mass-exemption, like the students of '68, / who no longer have a 'past' and instead hold / positions in the civil service", and in the excellent "Touring Company", where the disparate elements of the poem – the poet's actress girlfriend, small change left on the floor, dust, blood and "dead human skin" – are drawn together into a meditation on mortality that is funny and serious at the same time:

Yesterday, you played five small parts  
in *Macbeth*: four cowards and a murdered child –  
a friend drew a red line across your throat  
with his dagger. I sat in the front row,  
worrying about the psychological consequences  
of being murdered every night for a month.

It is often difficult to catch a new writer's tone of voice, and there will be those who take Hofmann to be a whimsical and even cynical raconteur. That would be a mistake. He is a vulnerable and at times rather naïve lyric poet, whose attentiveness to the workaday world does not preclude an interest in larger themes, and who on the evidence of this collection must be reckoned to have a bright future.

But there are five more verses, and the poem ends not in charities, nor in the faith and hope that have been briefly approved, but, with and dignity, in words alone. "In memory of those things these words were born". Does Hill in this last line contrast "memory" with "history" as Péguy does, and claim that he not only, with history, considers "life at the moment it becomes dead", but remains with memory in the event? I should like to think that the poem does that: it is refreshing, melodious, intelligent but puzzled, and I am not sure. I am sure, however, that we are lucky to live with so good a poem appears.

In *Three Literary Friendships* (184pp. Quercus. £8.95. 0 7043 2370 2) John Lehmann examines the mutually creative influences springing from the association of Byron with Shelley, Keats with Keats, and Robert Frost with Edward Thomas. As Lehmann reveals in his introduction, for him "one of the most intriguing aspects of . . . the poetry of the last 200 years is the way in which two outstanding and highly gifted poets have come together for one reason or another – living proximity . . . or the discovery of close spiritual affinity – and for a certain number of years have influenced one another in their being and art, and indeed brought out the best, perhaps the unexpected best, in one another's gifts" (although, as he also confesses, "such mutual influence is not easy to detect or define, and one has to be guided as much by intuition and imagination as by recorded fact." The work is illustrated with eight pages of black-and-white plates.

his night over his fate as though in sleep  
or to ward off the sun, the body's prayer,  
the tribute of his true passion for Charles:  
steadfastly leaving to the Beque, for her  
the Virgin of Innumerable charities.

# The essentially gratuitous

## John McGilchrist

LEWIS HYDE  
*The Gift: Imagination and the erotic life of property*  
30pp. New York: Random House. \$17.95.  
0 385 52301 6

Lewis Hyde has taken the idea of works of art as gifts and elaborated it in a well-written and unpretentious book. The subject is an important and interesting one, perhaps even more than this book suggests. In our own society, art, like other things, is governed by the market, with the wind behind him, Salvador Dali was capable, according to one of his associates, of signing 1,800 blank sheets of paper in an hour, aided by three attendants who briskly moved the paper as the master dashed off his signature. The immediate rise and subsequent collapse of Dali's pecuniary fortunes which ensued would be, for Hyde, a demonstration of the falsity of treating gifts – works of art – as commodities, though it might alternatively be seen as a lesson in basic economics.

Market economies are contrasted by Hyde with "gift communities", in which property circulates, and does not accumulate as capital. But what is a gift? Gifts are rare things. Hyde discusses a number of "gift communities", such as the Kula ring of the Trobriand Islanders, described by Malinowski. Here objects circulate round an extended ring of islands, passing from hand to hand, and taking perhaps two years to complete a circuit. These objects are described as gifts. If a gift, though, is something freely given, with no expectation of return, then this perpetual motion of property, socially important as it is to the islanders, and attractive as it may be to the Western observer tired of market economies, is not an example of giving, but a sophisticated instance of barter.

There are, of course, important differences between this phenomenon and straightforward barter. One results from distance: the giver gives to one from whom he has not directly received, and receives from another to whom he has not directly given. Another results from the fact that the process cannot end in any permanent advantage to any one member of the ring. So although the material effect is one of barter, the psychological and social focus is the act of trust placed by the individual in the social group, rather than the strengthening of any one individual.

In this respect it is like the giving of birthday or Christmas presents. We do not discuss their value, we do not formally require reciprocity; the act itself is what matters. Yet because the act is predictable and formalized by social custom, it is not an instance of free giving. Only "unbirthday" presents can be that. The meaning of a gift depends on its being more than is expected or required, and on its having no security of return. Once gift-giving is formalized, it becomes both expected and secure. This means that free gifts can no longer be made within the system; and even "utilitarian" gifts, such as those which are designed to cement interests of some kind, lose their point since it depends on the spontaneous nature of the gift, and on the vulnerability of the giver in making an act of trust. This has the incidental, and perhaps paradoxical, effect that it is relatively difficult to give a gift in a gift community, and the easiest place for giving, and the one in which gifts have the greatest meaning, is one in which relations between individuals are as far as possible governed by the market.

Hyde's general aim is to show the superiority of a "commerce of gifts", in particular for the artist, whose place in a market society is equivocal. The place of the artist in such a society is a fascinating question, and one that Hyde has been brought to ponder in relation to his own life; he has worked as an electrician, a teacher and a carpenter in his attempt to support himself while writing. Yet perhaps, on the unhelpful practical question of how artists are to make a living, nothing much new can be said. Hyde's own conclusions are familiar enough: an artist must either work, get a patron, or sell his achievements; and he will be best able to do either of the latter in a society which can "con-

vert market wealth to gift wealth", thus settling "the debt it owes to those who have dedicated their lives to the realisation of a gift".

But does society owe a debt to the artist, and in what sense does his dedication differ from that of anyone who devotes his time to something he wants to do, or is more or less compelled to do? The sacrificial flavour depends on the fact that art usually pays badly. Thus to argue that artists should be paid because they have made a special sacrifice is to argue in a circle. If they can expect payment from society, it is because they provide something society wants, not because of something they may be supposed to have forgone on society's behalf. Moreover dedication implies a degree of voluntary control which might not be appropriate. It is likely that what makes the biggest difference to the welfare of the individual artist and, perhaps more important in the long run, to the art itself, is not an as yet undefined "gift economy", but a society in which patrons (of whatever kind) are educated in a manner worthy of their artists, and in which artists go some way towards satisfying their patrons. The work of art comes to the artist as a gift of sorts, and he makes a gift of it to humanity. Humanity may or may not make a return gift. What Hyde seems to be asking is that the artist's work should be treated not as a gift by its recipients, but as an object of trade.

The economic sense in which art may be considered a gift is the one which takes up most of the book. But, as Hyde recognizes, there are at least three distinct respects in which a work of art may be thought of as a gift. In the first place, it comes to the artist, initially at least, from outside the field of conscious intention. Then the ability to do the work is a gift. Lastly the work is presented to others as a gift of the artist. The first of these senses seems to me to have the most important implications. For one thing, it suggests that there is no unbroken line of progression for the critic to follow from the achieved work back to its origins. As a gift, it is unpredictable, unsolicited, and possibly unwanted. This does not prevent its being treated, once it exists, as inevitable, and as though designed to serve a conscious purpose of the artist's. The essentially gratuitous – gift-like – nature of art is the source of much of its power to please and, above all, to liberate. Unfortunately academic criticism has to be committed to the assumption that everything has a purpose, and that it is its task to show what that purpose is.

"The passage into mystery always refreshes . . . we are lightened when our gifts rise from pools we cannot fathom. Then we know they are not a solitary egotism and they are inexhaustible. Anything contained within a boundary must contain as well its own exhaustion." Hyde's enthusiasm is appropriate. Enthusiasm itself he sees as an embodied, and bodily moving, gift, where abstract thought belongs to the world of market exchange. "Cash exchange is to gift exchange what reason is to enthusiasm", he writes. Hyde contrasts the circulation of gifts among some primitive peoples with the hoarding of those same gifts when they passed into the hands of the first anthropologists, and were despatched to the museums of the great universities. Perhaps it is an inevitable effect of the competition of individuals for material, and for things to say about the material, that works of art become so readily transformed by

*Patrons Despite Themselves: Taxpayers and Arts Policy* by Alan L. Feld, Michael O'Hare and J. Mark Davidson Schuster (203pp. New York University Press. \$29.50. 0 8147 2572 4) is a study of tax policy as it relates to the arts in the United States. The system of American support for the arts – by which almost two-thirds of government support is provided through the tax system rather than by treasury funds – is examined in detail. There are chapters on "Artists as Taxpayers", "Types of Indirect Aid", "Who Benefits? Who Pays?", "Decisionmaking", "Effects on Arts Institutions" and "Tax Law Changes: Consequences for Arts Institutions". A final chapter, "Insights and Recommendations", finds that indirect aid is not radically different in its distribution effects from direct forms of aid and concludes that several specific changes must be made in the tax system in order to correct certain major failings.

the academic process from gifts into private commodities, and even things to say about them become private property.

What I find particularly interesting is that Hyde should link abstraction with exchange, on the one hand, and embodiment with gifts, on the other. For it seems to me that in a work of art it is whatever is unique and unrepeatable which might be called a gift, its uniqueness being a product of its physical being. Equally on the other side, whatever is repeatable and could be worked up to again from general principles, might be described as the product of exchange (for labour), this being whatever may be abstracted from the work of art. Once again, if we recognize some element of art as a gift, this has important consequences for literary criticism.

"Celebratory speech is the return gift by which what has been received by the self is freed and passed along." We do not live in a celebratory age. Religion has been stripped as far as possible of the celebration which constitutes its essential nature, and made to serve purposes, which are inevitably the purposes of the age. Perhaps the tendency to rationalize and functionalize religion is not so new; there has been, from Pelagius onwards, a tendency in Western religious thought towards the idea that goodness, and the fruits of goodness, are the objects of exchange, and can be earned. Institutional Christianity has offered enticements to invest in goodness, despite the fact that the parable of the vineyard suggests that a good life is a gift in both senses – virtue is its own reward. Spirituality is undemocratic; of the *tao*, Chuang Tzu writes that only he who already has it can receive it. The gifts of art, being gifts, are equally undemocratic; like those of religion, they are gratuitous and not to be accounted for. In the light of this it surprises me that Hyde should ask for something less like a lottery in response from society, since to do so is not to move toward, but away from, the concept of the gift.

"I celebrate myself": Walt Whitman is one of the two poets to whom Hyde devotes a chapter in this book (the other being Ezra

Pound). Whitman's poetry is a lively expression of enthusiasm for the myriads of individual things in creation: "even Whitman's emphasis on the masses arises from his desire to nurture the idiosyncratic", as Hyde says. Like Lawrence, whom in verse form, in zest of phrase, and in certain aspects of his psychology he a little resembles, Whitman celebrates the transmission of life, both within himself physically – "my respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart, the passing of blood and air through my lungs" – and more metaphysically, from living being to living being. In the pleasure he took in plenitude, in his love for the individual and gratuitous, and in his naive enthusiasm, he is Hyde's perfect choice to express the celebration of the gift. Sadly the chapter on Pound is mostly about dollars. The balance between discussing how poets deal with money, and, much more interestingly, how viewing art as a gift changes our attitude to it is uneasy in this book.

The emphasis throughout Whitman's poetry on respiration is reminiscent of Wordsworth; and indeed the sense of physical vitality, mixed with an innocent if sometimes mildly absurd fascination with the self, is not unlike Wordsworth. (They both repeatedly connect inspiration with the experience of lying under trees, though Wordsworth would have been surprised by Whitman's habit of wrestling with a sapling before breakfast.) It has always seemed to me that Wordsworth's egotism is hardly egotistic, since he has an almost selfless enthusiasm for what he looks on as pure gift – the word "give" is one of the single most common words in Wordsworth's poetry, more common even than such characteristic words as "feel" or "seem". There is no more central idea in his philosophy of nature and the poet than the idea of the gift. The odd thing is that Hyde's two areas of interest come together so perfectly in Wordsworth: for it was not just inspiration, but money, which came to him again and again as gifts: the legacies, the sinecure as Stamp-Distributor, the civil list pension. Unreliable as a precedent, of course; but gifts – however much Lewis Hyde may wish the contrary were true – are unreliable.

## Realizations

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Handwritten text in the right margin: "The gift is the gift of the self." (written vertically)



# The daring and the chatter

Julian Symons

DIANE JOHNSON  
Dashiell Hammett: A Life  
336pp. Chatto and Windus. £12.95.  
07011 2766 X

This is the third biographical study of Dashiell Hammett to appear within as many years, following Richard Layman's *Shadow Man* and William F. Nolan's *Gossip Hammett, A Life at the Edge*. Between the conception and the achievement of any previous book on Hammett fell the shadow of Lillian Hellman. Layman's book was, as he said in the preface, written "without her assistance and without hindrance from her". He remarked also that Hellman had obtained control of all Hammett's copyrights after his death on the ground that she might "write a book about the deceased or his works" if "a reasonable offer is made". For the sum of \$5,000 she took charge of the estate, leaving Hammett's family with no legal claim to any benefit from his works, even though his will left half of the estate to his daughter Josephine, a quarter to his daughter Mary, and only the remaining quarter to Hellman. It should be added in explanation that when Hammett died his works were out of print, his assets small, and debts or liens against the estate over \$200,000. Hellman was strongly influential in the Hammett revival. She wrote several memoirs of Hammett but no biography, and she discouraged biographers other than the one she had chosen, at first Steven Marcus and then Diane Johnson. There are similarities between her attitude and that of George Orwell's widow Sonia before she invited Bernard Crick to write Orwell's biography, an invitation she later tried vainly to retract. Ms Johnson's book has been long awaited as the authorized biography.

It is a deeply disappointing book. The gushing tone of the first acknowledgment, giving thanks for "the gracious cooperation of Hammett's dearest friend and executor, Lillian Hellman" does not promise well, but in fact no Hellman blue pencil is obvious in the text. The account of their relationship lacks nothing in candour, including as it does the revelation that Hammett sometimes asked Hellman to "make a threesome" to see how far she would go, and that they never made love again after her rejection of him one night in 1942, although they often lived together during the remaining nineteen years of his life. The book's failure springs from Johnson's inability to order and shape the material under hand. She had, it is true, the basic problem that her two principal witnesses were untrustworthy. When he had become famous Hammett deliberately romanticized his life as a Pinkerton man, and Hellman's various accounts of her life with him were, as she herself engagingly admitted, by no means wholly accurate. Dates are sometimes astray, incidents didn't occur quite in the way she describes them, perhaps some of them didn't happen at all.

Confronted with such invertebrate dramatizers, what is a biographer to do? Surely compare known fact with embroidered statement, look carefully for confirmation of good but improbable stories, present a balance of probabilities, hedge where necessary. But that is not Johnson's way. She often presents possible and even unlikely statements in a way that makes them look like fact, and she rarely bothers to mention doubts about the authenticity of any story. Two instances will show her approach. Several years after the event Hammett spoke of his involvement with a Pinkerton man in the Betty Arbuckle rape case of 1921, and also told the story of an incident earlier in his Pinkerton career when he was offered several thousand dollars by agents of mine owners to assassinate an IWW leader named Frank Little who was in fact dragged out from a boarding house during the course of a strike, and lynched. Hammett's involvement depends in both cases almost entirely on his own word, but Johnson accepts it without question, and in the Little case goes on to conjecture that through the case "Hammett saw that the actions of the guards and the guarding of the detective and the man he's talking, are releases of a single sensibility, on the fringe where murderers and thieves live".

She does not mention that Hammett's wife and his daughter Mary said that he did not work on the Arbuckle case, nor that, according to his daughter, he said that at the time "he didn't care if his clients were bums, he was strictly out to do his job", and so was prepared to help break a strike. The remark makes the high-flown thoughts Johnson attributes to him seem unlikely. These are small points taken in isolation, but a biography is made from dozens of such points.

There is a sense in which Johnson has been hampered both by Hellman's reminiscences and by Layman's book. She has deliberately avoided paraphrasing Hellman or using passages from her writings about Hammett, preferring wherever possible to rely on Hammett's colourful letters. The letters are excellent, and one would not wish to be without them, but the effect of this approach in the omission of many incidents that, whether wholly accurate or not, throw light on both Hammett and Hellman. One is the long tale in *Penitence* about the snapping turtle that survived being shot and then decapitated by Hammett, and prompted Hellman to telephone the New York Zoological Society with questions about the nature of life, although she is prepared to argue with him about speculative matters. The result is again that she omits a good many details (for instance, that an area in southern Maryland was known as Hammettville) while correcting him by claiming that Hammett's father was not a hard drinker as Layman had it, but, according to Dashiell's sister Reba, "never touched a drop". The end result of this approach is that a good deal may be found in both Hellman and Layman that remains unmentioned in this new biography. The treatment of Hammett's work for the studios in Hollywood is particularly inadequate, and anybody interested in it will find far more information in Layman and Nolan.

There is also Johnson's style. She has not wanted to quote too much, and so has included "passages based on Hammett's thoughts or feelings" which she assures us have their origins in his letters. One can only say that they must have suffered a disastrous sea change. We are admitted into the thoughts of Jose, the young nurse Hammett married, in writing of sickly banality:

Of course Jose wanted him to succeed as a writer, but she did not understand how much it meant to him. In her heart she wished he were something steady - perhaps a clerk in the store - and when he reproached her with this secret wish of hers, for he saw, it seemed, into her heart, she was ashamed that it was true. She did not think highly of the occupation of writer, the way he had to struggle, and the hours he kept.

But Josephine thought Hammett was a wonderful husband, so intelligent and kindly, so helpful with the baby and so fond of her, and so brave about his health - for he wasn't well.

There are many similar passages in the book, some attributed to Hammett's young daughter Jo and Mary, others to Hammett himself. "He wrote letters signed Love, love and kisses, Kisses and hugs, Many kisses, Lots of love. But it was love, real love, that he could never speak of, except when drinking."

Direct quotation would have been less embarrassing than such sentimental near-fiction, but that might have involved authorial comment, which is almost everywhere avoided. Among the devices Johnson uses to retain impersonality is the occasional interpolation of "voices", stories recounted by friends commenting on Hammett's behaviour at a particular time. Thus, one remembers his throwing handfuls of forks, knives and spoons around a restaurant in his drinking days in Hollywood during the mid-1930s, another his falling flat on his face in the Trocadero and elsewhere, another his taking a ring from a friend and refusing to give it back. Many of these anecdotes are about Hammett's ways with women: A naked hooker is told to stay in the bathroom at a party given by Hammett; Sidney Perelman goes up there and is discovered by his wife Laura and others. "It ended with Laura going off to San Francisco with Hammett, ... they were gone for days, and there was hell to pay all around". Another woman recalls a friend having "a little fling" with Hammett, and breaking it off because "she couldn't take all the whores. It was so insulting." Hammett found great pleasure in

prostitutes. A young secretary assigned to him by the studio went each day to his house, but did not work. Sometimes he failed to appear, sometimes he came down and they did the crossword puzzle together, sometimes prostitutes came down the stairs, often black or Oriental, a different one every time. It is not surprising that he contracted VD four times, in 1936 so badly that rectal irrigations were unsuccessful, and he had to be heated up in an oxygen tent for three days, so that he lay delirious with a temperature of 107 degrees. The treatment was successful.

There is a lot of new information about Hammett in the book, including most of the stories in the preceding paragraph. (Layman



calls the 1936 occasion Hammett's second dose of clap, not his fourth, and does not mention the grim details.) Some of it shows his agreeable qualities, and suggests his charm. The letters to Hellman are constantly lively and amusing, whether he is telling her that "I have to go on practically masturbating" - by which he meant sleeping around - in her absence, or reproaching her when he heard rumours that she was doing the same thing: "Tsi Tsi Just a she-Hammett." Several stories show his indifference to money and readiness to give it away, although he was delighted when Hellman asked him whether a brooch he had given her cost as much as five hundred dollars. Yes, he said, but not as much as six hundred, and put her down as the five hundred type. After neglecting his wife and children (there is a letter from Jose to his publisher Alfred Knopf saying that she had heard nothing from him for months) he bought his daughters expensive presents, "and once when he had won at the track he gave Jo fifty dollars, and she was only nine, and 50 dollars each for Jose and Mary. It was a fortune." In 1945 he bought a house for them in West Los Angeles, and became deeply attached to Jo, to whom he wrote many whimsical charming letters.

By this time the shadows were closing in on his life. He had written no book for more than a decade, and told Jo: "It's swell having a new novel not to do: I was getting pretty bored with just not working on that half a dozen or so old ones." He had temporarily escaped the problems of drinking and not drinking, writing and not writing, by volunteering for the army at the age of forty-eight. He found army life on the Aleutian Islands in Alaska enjoyable - as Johnson says, he had throughout his life a liking for male society, and made no objection when the recruits called him Pop - but he emerged from it looking, as he said, like God's older brother, scrawny, grey-haired, with a full set of false teeth, his good looks gone. Ahead lay imprisonment for his refusal to answer questions about the funds of a Communist-front organization; poverty because his books were virtually proscribed and his income was attached by the Internal Revenue Service, and years of illness. All these he bore with exemplary patience and courage.

Johnson quotes several letters from this last period, most of them determinedly cheerful, but gives little new information. She omits Hammett's meeting after many years with his conservative brother Richard, and his reply to Richard's question whether he was a Communist:

"I'm a Marxist." She seems to have no doubt that he belonged to the American Communist Party, and says that he wanted to go to Spain during the Civil War, but was told by the Party to stay at home. "He was expected to be more useful here, and he tried to be." No documentation is given for this statement. Johnson is inclined to regard Hammett's refusal to answer questions as heroic, something not borne out by reading the Court transcript, although of course his refusal to name names showed a courage that many Hollywood actors, directors and writers lacked.

The book's chief weakness, apart from the sloppiness of the writing, is that it is a portrait of Nick Charles rather than Dashiell Hammett. The Nick Charles element was certainly present in Hammett's personality - the offhand charm, hard drinking, wisecracking, whimsicality, liking for good clothes and all kinds of women - but it was the least interesting side of him, as man and writer. John Crosby is quoted as saying, when Hammett died, that American television was full of "imitations of imitation Sam Spades. . . . The stuff is turned out like salt-water taffy now, rather sexy and violent stuff. . . . Only the corruption remains; the talent has long since fled." Crosby's words are truer still today, than the dozens of books and television films about assorted villains are the palest copies of a truly original talent. In her introduction Johnson makes the interesting suggestion that the handing down of authority and the conflict between father and son are central to Hammett's work. The Continental Op, she says, is ruled by a powerful father in the Old Man. "Other fathers in Hammett's work prevail over sons", and "the central crime in two of his novels, *The Glass Key* and *Red Harvest*, is the murder of a son by his father".

Do the stories and books, then, come from the writer's need to "dramatize his attitude to authority"? Johnson leaves the idea there, without attempting to justify it in detail, but it makes considerable sense in relation to Hammett's failure to write any full-length fiction for the last quarter-century of his life. If the books represent a rebellion against authority, his relationship to the American Communist Party was one of complete submission. He followed it faithfully through the divagations of the Party line in the 1940s and 1950s, implicitly and sometimes explicitly endorsing attitudes that were an insult to his intelligence and integrity, loyal as a son to an erring parent. The nearest he got to criticism was that answer to his brother's question "Are you a Communist?": "I'm a Marxist". But such determined submission of the individual to an authority that was by definition never wrong may have been the final factor removing the need to write in Hammett.

He could not write, Johnson says, because he had nothing left to write about. She is referring to his severance from San Francisco, from obscurity, and from what she calls the social class to which he owed allegiance. It is true that he had probably spun the best material out of his Pinkerton years, but other subjects surely lay to hand in New York and Hollywood. Whether one accepts the idea that his need to rebel against authority had disappeared with adherence to the Party line, believes as some of his friends did that he was strongly impelled towards self-destruction, or says simply that some flaw of personality made him unable to cope with success although he stoically endured early struggles and late poverty and disregard, there is plenty of evidence that inability to write caused him anguish.

Hammett loved the Aleutians, their savage coldness and extraordinary beauty, "such mountains and lakes as no other place can match". He read a great deal during the long hours of leisure there, Marx and left-wing novels and pamphlets, Charlotte Brontë and Bram Stoker. He discovered Auden, and "the opening of one of the sonnets in *Journey to a War* may have struck home to him poignantly:

The life of man is never quite completed;  
The daring and the chatter will go on;  
But, as an artist feels his power go, he  
These walk the earth and know themselves defeated.

The interesting Hammett story is not that of how many girls he laid, or how many times he fell flat on his face or back. It is the story of a talent that disappeared, a man defeated.

# The case for the Common Market

Eric Roll

ROY JENKINS (Editor)  
*Britain and the EEC*  
289pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback, £7.95).  
0333 34690 4  
ALIM EL-AGRAA (Editor)  
*Britain Within the European Community: The way forward*  
356pp. Macmillan. £25 (paperback, £8.95).  
0333 34523 1

It is a happy coincidence that these two volumes addressed to the same set of issues should have been brought out by the same publisher at a time when public debate on Britain's role in the European Community - and with it the future of the Community itself - is showing signs of becoming more lively. Both volumes cover much the same ground, but while that edited by Roy Jenkins - presenting papers read at Section F of the British Association, that is to say, not to a specialized audience - could be read with advantage by general readers, that edited by Ali M. El-Agraa contains much more technical economic analysis, sometimes of a quite sophisticated kind, and is thus likely to appeal more to the specialist.

The books sum up nearly twenty-five years of existence of the Community and ten of Britain's membership of it. With two exceptions, the authors in El-Agraa's volume are practising academics (one of the exceptions, the disting-

uished director of the Policy Studies Institute, John Pinder, has also contributed to the Jenkins volume), while the contributors to *Britain and the EEC* include, apart from the editor himself, a former President of the EEC Commission, a current Vice-President, and a number of others who, though essentially academic, also have fairly active relationships outside the university.

Both books are comprehensive. Each contains chapters on the history, the politics and the institutions of the EEC, and on Britain's relations with it: in *Britain and the EEC* two chapters, by F. S. Northedge and Mr Pinder; in *Britain within the European Community* by Pinder and Stephen C. Holt. There are chapters on agriculture, by John Marsh and Christopher Tugendhat in the first volume, and by El-Agraa in the second. Regional policy and the impact of membership on our industrial performance are dealt with by Geoffrey Denton and Robert Grant in the first volume, where Martin Woolf writes on European Trade Policy; there are chapters on, broadly speaking, the same topics in the second volume by Harvey Armstrong, Alan Butt Philip and the editor. Energy policy, transport policy and social policy all receive explicit treatment in the second volume, while defence policy, which has a separate chapter in El-Agraa's book, is dealt with in the other as part of the political evolution of the Community by Mr Jenkins himself and Roger Morgan.

One problem of special, and topical interest

## Efforts at embargo

Peter Oppenheimer

M. S. DAOUDI and M. S. DAJANI  
*Economic Sanctions: Ideals and experience*  
263pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £14.95.  
07100 9583 X

Economic sanctions, boycotts and embargoes have been invoked with frequency and persistence as government policy weapons over the past half-century. Leaving aside their wartime use, they featured in the Covenant of the League of Nations as the principal means by which an aggressor state might be brought to heel and war thereby prevented or cut short. The practical record of the inter-war years ended in failure, with the League's refusal to invoke sanctions against Japan in the Manchurian crisis of 1931 and its half-hearted application of them against Italy after the invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. But there were also some successes, notably in 1921, when Yugoslavia was prevailed upon to withdraw its forces from Albania.

After 1945 the United Nations Charter again provided for sanctions, but in more cautious and roundabout fashion, with power of decision assigned under Article 41 to the Security Council. The most noteworthy instance of UN sanctions is the case of Rhodesia during its "illegal" independence (1965-79). Far more numerous, however, have been sanction-style measures applied not under UN aegis but by groups of countries or by individual states (mostly the super-powers) in furtherance of their particular interests and objectives.

The authors of this study accordingly draw a threefold distinction between universal (ie League of Nations or UN), multilateral and unilateral sanctions. The second group includes the Western strategic embargo against the Soviet Union and its allies, the boycott of Iranian oil in the Mossadeq episode (1951-53), the withdrawal of Western finance from the Aswan High Dam project in 1956 (although this was really a unilateral US move), the Arab League boycott of Israel, the Arab oil embargo in 1973-74, Western trade sanctions against Iran in 1980-81, and the multilateral sanctions against Argentina during the Falklands crisis. The third (unilateral) category covers a variety of Soviet and US measures, including most recently President Carter's grain embargo against the Soviet Union after the intervention in Afghanistan, the US immobilization of Iranian bank deposits and the Siberian pipeline embargo.

The authors perform a useful service in pointing out that up to about 1960 politicians and commentators alike tended to believe in

sanctions as a weapon of great potential. Since then, the commentators at any rate have swung over to a sceptical position - arguably too much so. The attempt, however, to dress up this change of view in the language of T. S. Kuhn's scientific "paradigms" is misplaced, a cheap attempt at conceptual trendiness. The book is also rather weak on economics and indeed on analysis generally. While key points are seldom absent they are not highlighted. Instead, they tend to be tucked away in a catalogue of numbered items or a subordinate clause in mid-paragraph, and so will not be recognized by the uninitiated. Thus, nowhere do the authors properly spell out the basic point that, since international trade is mutually beneficial, any effective sanction entails costs for the sanctioner, and these costs may prove less acceptable than the damage inflicted on the "target". Similarly, the notion of substitution and its varieties (in trade, in consumption, in production) is not adequately set forth.

The treatment of particular case studies is open to analogous criticism. In the case of Rhodesia, the subtleties of South Africa's role are missed. Of course the South Africans played a key role in the ostensible defeat of sanctions, but they also had no intention of taking on Rhodesia as a permanent addition to their load of political handicaps; so they were careful to limit support for the Smith regime, and ultimately put pressure on Smith to reach a settlement. Another example occurs in the discussion of the grain embargo. The authors diagnose Argentina as the chief villain of the piece (or peace), for refusing to cooperate with the United States:

To make good on its highly profitable grain deals with the Soviet Union, Argentina exported less to its traditional customers - Chile, Peru, Spain, Italy and Japan. But those nations did not suffer, because they were able to replace Argentinean grain with the cheaper, embargoed American grain. It was belatedly recognized by the Carter administration that Argentina's refusal to participate in the embargo could make it largely ineffective.

The crucial item here is not Argentinean behaviour, but America's own failure to curb its total grain exports in line with the amounts embargoed. If embargoed US grain was available on the cheap to Chile and Co. it is hardly surprising that they preferred it to more expensive Argentinean produce, or that the Argentinians felt obliged to look elsewhere for markets.

Despite such shortcomings, the book has merit as a work of survey and a catalogue of the literature. The massive thirty-page bibliography at the end would run to at least fifty pages if it included in addition all the works cited in footnotes to the text.

is that of the European Monetary System. In *Britain and the EEC*, Geoffrey E. Wood comes to a negative conclusion as regards the value of the EMS within its present scope, namely to moderate exchange-rate fluctuations in member nations' currencies; he compares this system unfavourably with the possible institution of a real "European Money", or at least an agreement among members on common monetary policies while maintaining a floating-rate system. Presumably Mr Wood would, therefore, reject the plea, explicit or implied, by a number of his co-authors that Britain should join the EMS, a conclusion also reached in a recent study by a House of Lords Committee, which was widely supported when the report was debated. In the El-Agraa volume, David Llewellyn takes a broadly similar view, though he goes even further than Wood in desiring not only a convergence between members of their monetary policies as a precondition of an exchange-rate system, but harmonization over the whole range of macroeconomic policies. It is not surprising that economists should choose to emphasize the difficulty (many of them would say the impossibility) of maintaining a reasonably stable exchange-rate system in the absence of such convergence. It may be, however, that in practical terms it is easier to get governments to agree in the first place on an exchange-rate system, the maintenance of which will require a degree of convergence in economic policies, rather than the other way round.

Special mention should be made of Cripps's contribution to the Jenkins volume. This is an important study (more technical than the rest of the book) of the problem of macroeconomic policy for both Britain and the Community. It is particularly relevant in a time of depression, when there is still little prospect of an early resumption of adequate growth. Cripps's conclusion, briefly, is that unilateral reflation (by the UK) would have a very high cost in terms of the trade balance, while a general reflation in

Europe would be beneficial to the UK, though (given the structure of our trade) not as beneficial as a general reflation in the rest of the world outside Europe.

Whether the "best" choice, of a reflation outside Europe - presumably in the United States, Japan and the countries of the Third World (how, one wonders, given the present problem of their indebtedness?) - is realistically more open, as against the second best, of a general and coordinated reflation within Europe, is very difficult to determine, as both still seem very distant.

Another topic already very much on the agenda and likely to become increasingly so, that of foreign and security policy, is referred to in Jenkins's introductory essay. His conclusion is quite clear-cut: he is in favour of a positive development, in which he hopes Britain will play a leading role, a conclusion supported by Northedge in his analysis of the history of Britain's attitude to the Community.

On the twin questions likely to be uppermost in most readers' minds - how has Britain fared inside the Community, and should it stay in? - it would be difficult and possibly unfair to burden the collective authorship of these books with a single, definite view. El-Agraa, who asks the question explicitly, has no doubt that membership has been beneficial, while Jenkins's strongly pro-European views have long been on record and are eloquently re-stated here. To one reader at least (who may be prejudiced), none of the political or economic arguments, general or specific, put forward by any of the authors, seems to point in the opposite direction. However, while one may draw a generally favourable conclusion from these two books as far as our continued membership is concerned, one other thing clearly emerges: neither the future prosperity of the Community nor the benefit Great Britain may be expected to derive from its membership are secure without a far more active participation by the UK in the Community's further development.

## The booming bean

V. Bulmer-Thomas

LAIRD W. BERGAD  
*Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico*  
242pp. Princeton University Press. £23.90 (paperback, £12.60).  
0691 07644

"Coffee and society" has provided the theme for many good books on the republics of Latin America. One thinks immediately of Marco Palacios's study of Colombia, Carolyn Hall's of Costa Rica and Stanley Stein's on Vassouras in Brazil. Laird W. Bergad would, I imagine, be happy to see his own work as extending this tradition.

The attraction of the theme is not hard to explain. In each of the main coffee-producing countries of Latin America, coffee exports experienced a spectacular rise in the nineteenth century, which affected profoundly not only the country's overall economic performance, but also the markets for land, labour and capital, which in turn affected social relations and, at times, political developments.

The connection of coffee with Puerto Rican society, however, is at first somewhat surprising. In both the early nineteenth and the twentieth century, Puerto Rico has been thought of as a sugar society, but one of the merits of Professor Bergad's study is the sharp reminder he gives that by the 1870s coffee had equalled sugar in terms of foreign-exchange earnings and by 1897 accounted for nearly 80 per cent of exports by value.

In the following two years (1898-99), Puerto Rico was annexed to the United States and suffered a very severe hurricane. Both events had a disastrous impact on the thriving coffee industry; the hurricane uprooted coffee plantations, reducing in the short term the prospect of high levels of production and exports, while the annexation brought Puerto Rico within the tariff structure of the United States, which favoured domestic production of sugar over coffee. The coffee industry never recovered from these two blows and Bergad's preface describes evocatively the neglected and abandoned

coffee haciendas of the Puerto Rican interior.

He sees a certain inevitability in this cycle of economic life and death. Indeed, in his conclusions he uses it to provide support for a weak version of dependency theory: "The development of monocultural economies in different geographical regions of Latin America has been an endemic problem. . . . In Latin America boom and bust cycles, such as that of coffee in Puerto Rico, have followed a consistent pattern from region to region." In support of this contention he offers a brief view of the other coffee-producing countries, notably Costa Rica and Colombia.

Unfortunately, Bergad's conclusions are not supported by his evidence. He makes a very convincing case that the failure of coffee to generate economic and political stability in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico was due to the behaviour of immigrant entrepreneurs, who came from Spain with the intention of accumulating capital as quickly as possible before retiring to the mother country. These immigrants dominated all aspects of the coffee trade and had no interest in diversification or the development of social infrastructure, except in so far as it affected the profitability of their own enterprises. This tension, however, between *criollos* and *peninsulares* is peculiar to colonial Latin America and makes Puerto Rico something of a special case in the nineteenth century. In Costa Rica, for example, foreign merchants were present in the coffee trade, but it was essentially a national industry and foreign control was never allowed to penetrate too far; as a result, coffee did contribute to economic and political stability in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

These criticisms apart, Professor Bergad's study is a welcome addition to our understanding of coffee societies in general and Puerto Rico in particular. The author has had access to a mass of archival material, which has enabled him to study the impact of coffee on society at the level of the *municipio*. This micro approach has proved particularly useful in analysis of the labour market, where information at the macro level is often either absent or misleading.



## The Bulgarian version

Erik de Mauny

GEORGI MARKOV  
The Truth That Killed  
Translated by Liliana Brisy  
280pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.  
0297 783009

This is the posthumous autobiography of a brave man who met a bizarre end. On the afternoon of September 7, 1978, Georgi Markov, a self-exiled Bulgarian novelist and playwright, was walking across Waterloo Bridge when he felt a stinging pain in the back of his right thigh. Turning, he saw a man stoop to retrieve an umbrella; the man murmured "I'm sorry", and hurried off to hail a taxi. Early next morning Markov began to run a high fever, and four days later he was dead. An autopsy disclosed that lodged in his thigh was a tiny pellet filled with a rare and deadly poison, ricin, which had presumably been fired from the umbrella-gun of his unknown assailant.

The identity of the attacker will almost certainly never be known, but his motives were anything but obscure. In addition to working for the BBC, Markov had, over a period of two and a half years, made weekly broadcasts over Radio Free Europe, in which, with devastating accuracy, he had laid bare the corruption, the sycophancy, the secret stratagems and the limitless servility before its Soviet masters of the Bulgarian Communist Party and its leader, Todor Zhivkov. These brought him a vast audience in his native country, but plainly threw

its leaders into paroxysms of rage, and he received several warnings that, unless he stopped his broadcasts, his life would be in danger, all of which he chose to ignore.

It is not difficult to see why the Bulgarian leadership was so incensed. Markov was able to write as an insider, as one who had once been a cherished offspring of the régime, and as such, allowed into the intimacy of its highest circles. He had begun his working life as a chemical engineer, but even during his student days at the Sofia Polytechnic in the late 1940s the long shadow of Stalinist repression, in its Bulgarian version, had begun to fall across the country: a "cult of personality" closely modelled on the Soviet original grew up around Georgi Dimitrov, while the ordinary people were subjected to a stupefying round of political indoctrination, interspersed with purges and midnight arrests. With the death of Stalin and the launching of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign, the atmosphere inside Bulgaria grew somewhat lighter; but as in the Soviet Union, the Party structure remained intact, and in the name of the Marxist dialectic, jumped-up mediocrities continued to lord it over their hapless fellow-citizens.

By then, Markov had begun to make a name for himself as a writer, and in 1962, with the publication of his novel, *Men*, which won the year's top literary prize, he awoke to find himself a celebrity. Such overnight success can be a poisoned gift. Notwithstanding his acute awareness that he was playing a part in the theatre of the absurd, he endured the heavy

patronage of Zhivkov, and found himself steadily drawn into that not-so-subtle network of rewards and privileges in which people of talent in Communist societies are ensnared and emasculated. However, friendships in the ruling Politburo did not prevent him encountering increasing difficulties with the censorship, and by 1969 he had had enough. By then, the atmosphere had become unbearable, and he defected to the West.

Markov has been called "Bulgaria's Solzhenitsyn". This is a misleading comparison: the two men followed very different trajectories, and their literary gifts took very different forms. If Markov is to be compared with anyone, it is with that brilliant exiled Russian satirist, Vladimir Voinovich. He was, however, a writer of immense versatility, and despite the generally sombre background, parts of these memoirs are very funny indeed. Markov's widow, Annabel, pays just tribute to Markov's courage in taking a perilous cultural hurdle and embarking on a new literary career in the West at the age of forty. But these memoirs leave one with a lingering sense of surprise on two counts (they are a considerably abridged version of the Bulgarian original, which may partly account for it): first, by the standards of invective used among Communist leaders themselves, Markov's strictures against Todor Zhivkov are comparatively mild; and second, how is one to reconcile the doltishness of the Bulgarian Communist leadership with the sophistication of the means used to eliminate its most eloquent and determined critic?

## The anti-authoritarians

George Schöpflin

FERENC FEHÉR and ÁGNES HELLER  
*Hungary 1956 Revisited: The message of a Revolution - A quarter of a century after 1956*. Allen and Unwin. £15.  
0184 321017

Many readers may initially object to the quality of the language in *Hungary 1956 Revisited*. It is simultaneously convoluted and hectoring - a characteristic played up by the perplexing over-use of italics; propositions are "proved", individuals are "unmasked", intent is attributed to outcomes, and accident, incompetence, ignorance or vanity have no role. In the same way, collectivities like state or nation or society are active, purposeful participants in the political process, possessing knowledge and responsibility in a fairly concrete fashion. In short, this is the language of Marxist discourse, even though Ferenc Fehér and Ágnes Heller no longer regard themselves as Marxists.

Nevertheless, the book does offer certain important ideas. In the first part, the authors discuss the international implications of the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and argue that it constituted as much of a defeat for the West as it did for the Soviet Union. By its inactivity in 1956, they claim, the West lost a real chance of undoing the effects of Yalta - the division of Europe - because in the circumstances of the immediate post-Stalin period, a weakened Soviet leadership would have been ready to accept a Finlandized Eastern Europe if the United States had sought to achieve this.

But nothing was done and the chance of an early détente was missed. Not that the Soviet Union emerged from the crisis any better, the authors argue, for by not accepting a Finlandized, socialist Hungary (which was the aim of the revolution) the Kremlin steered the Soviet world into the ideological and political shadows where it is drifting today. Tito's Yugoslavia also comes in for the authors' censure: by approving the invasion of Hungary it lost all the influence it had had over the Soviet Union and thereafter found itself on the margins of East European politics.

The second part of the book deals with the internal political implications of the Hungarian revolution, and with the nature of revolutions as such. The hero of this exposition is the Hungarian political thinker István Bibó, a member of the short-lived revolutionary government and its most profound analyst. He summarized the aims of the revolution in a draft programme as based on the principles of democratic socialism and multi-party systems which together constituted the popular consensus of the revolution. The spontaneously organized workers' councils would guarantee its socialist quality, while the multi-party system would underwrite its democratic aspects. Here the book provides a useful discussion of the institutions thrown up by the revolution (general strike, mass demonstrations, civil disobedience, free press); of its demands (freedom for the Hungarian people to determine their own future in their own way); and why it was revolutionary at all (both the Stalinist and the inter-war authoritarian systems were regarded as bankrupt and there was a consensus on the need to embark on something radically new). The authors strongly emphasize the anti-authoritarian ethos of the revolution and its self-educative character: people were ready to learn in the process of developing new political institutions.

Inevitably not all the arguments will be regarded as equally persuasive. The authors are remarkably slapdash at times and occasionally adopt a rather cavalier attitude to detail, and non-Marxist readers may also feel that much of what they have to say has already been said by others. This last judgment would be unfair, for the book contains several insights of considerable value. However, the authors explicitly address the Marxist left, particularly that section of it which continues to regard the Hungarian revolution as having represented a choice between clerico-fascism and Sovietization and, therefore, supports the latter. If the book destroys the assumptions on which this false dichotomy is based, it will have served a useful purpose.

## Rounding up the strays

Patricia Craig

PATRICIA A. MCFATE (Editor)  
*Uncollected Prose of James Stephens*  
Volume 1, 1907-15; 0 333 32518 8  
Volume 2, 1916-48; 0 333 32517 6  
£20 per set. 0 333 34993 8  
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In June 1907 James Stephens was employed as a clerk-typist in the Dublin office of T. T. Mooney & Son, solicitors, and his published works consisted of a story, five articles and a poem. Of this meagre collection, it was the last item that caught the eye of the poet George Russell (AE), who tracked the author to his solicitors' office and accosted him at his typewriter, thereby initiating a durable friendship. Under the aegis of AE, Stephens was recruited to literary Dublin which was flourishing at that particular moment, even if adversity had afflicted a number of its stars: Synge, for example, whose *Playboy of the Western World* at the Abbey Theatre had lately been disrupted by riots; and Joyce, who had failed to find a Dublin publisher for *Dubliners*.

The literary excitement was partly a product of the newly aroused nationalist consciousness and the heady discoveries it had brought in its wake; not only were the Fenian and Red Branch sagas made available to a new audience, but a whole storehouse of Gaelic treasures - love songs, religious songs, and so on - was uncovered in Connacht by Douglas Hyde, who quickly provided excellent translations for the benefit of those not fluent in the original language. In 1892, Hyde was already calling for the de-anglicization of Ireland, and finding a good deal of support for his views; by the beginning of the present century, the cultivation of a mock-English outlook was equated, in Irish literary circles, with foolishness and a lack of integrity. Stephens's first published essay (uncollected until now), which appeared in Arthur Griffith's periodical *Sinn Féin*, characteristically derides the Seoinín (Little John, ie, a follower of John Bull) and his pretensions. The sentiment can be traced back to Swift, who advised his readers to burn everything English except their coal, or to those Gaelic poets of the seventeenth century who deplored the ascendancy of certain anglicized upstarts, along with everything else new-fangled in an English way. Stephens, true to the principles of the Gaelic League, recommends the Irish language and Irish styles of dress to his readers, and suggests they accord a proper reverence to the mythological heroes: "I have heard of a yech called Oscar, of a horse called Finn, and of a dog called Oisín", he states severely, not having yet developed the mischievous, whimsical, animated manner that makes the bulk of his writings so distinctive.

Still, for Stephens himself it was a moment of metamorphosis: "My life began when I started writing", he once assured his stepdaughter Iris Wise. His autobiography begins here too, in 1907 or thereabouts, since he did his best to obliterate every previous experience. The earliest of his letters (to survive was written in 1907; and in that year too he emerged as a husband and father. About Stephens's childhood we can be sure of nothing, not even his date of birth: February 2, 1882 is the one he claimed, but there is evidence pointing to a slightly earlier date. However, we have no reason to doubt that he was the James Stephens enrolled in a Protestant orphanage, the Meath Industrial School for Boys, in 1886. This makes an odd breeding ground for an Irish nationalist, let alone a poet, humorist and eccentric.

Stephens soon learnt to captivate his readers with the calm and sedate delivery of an unexpected observation: "bigotry is a life force. Tolerance is decadence and disease." It is part of his stock-in-trade to seem engagingly opinionated. The "unthinking" veneration of humor displaced him: "The witty mind is the most banal thing that exists." His journalism, says Stephens himself, of course, could hardly write a line of prose without infusing it with his own brand of drollery. His most famous work, the 1912 novel *The Crock of Gold*, sets out, among other things, to mock the pedagogic impulse, and "incidentally succeeds" in embodying all the charm of the literary revival, and few of its intangibles. Stephens's cherished idea, at the heart of the book, in profusion, around

this time, as he acknowledged later, he "sowed gods with both hands". Deities and fairies, indeed, nearly overwhelm the final section of *The Crock of Gold*; only a continuing note of asperity saves the whimsy from becoming unendurable.

Nothing Stephens does is unoriginal. In his poem "The Goat Paths" the object is to devise a verse equivalent for the winding goat tracks; the lines themselves twist and meander in a comparable way. Another, about a mountain, is specially constructed to procure breathlessness in the speaker as he reaches the summit. A fake-childish outspokenness is one of his traits: Now cry, go on, new like a little cat, And rub your eyes, and stamp, and tear your wig; I see your ankles! Listen, they are fat, And so's your head, you're angled like a twig. Your back's all baggy and your clothes don't fit, And your feet are big.

He understands that, for him, the best results come from tackling things "with the particularity of a grub working through an apple", though he goes on hankering after the "Mount of Transfiguration" method recommended by AE. By and large, in his own work, Stephens is wary of both the approaches guaranteed to produce bad verse in Ireland in the early part of this century: the high-flown and the homespun. He can be taxed with quaintness but not with artlessness, and there is a good deal of justification for the mild complaint he uttered in 1917: "I have not been well reviewed in the sense of true comprehension, and it has not been seen that under the apparent ease . . . of the narrative there has been an infinite, patient, curious care to do the work well". He is anti-philistine, even to the point of repudiating the literary products of those who sang for Ireland: "A country is in a pretty serious condition when its poetry has to become national . . .". For a present-day readership, though, there is something very limiting in his contention that poetry cannot accommodate a "subject" without turning into rhymed journalism; certainly it's an odd view for a professed follower of Browning. It took the events of 1916 to get a quasi-political poem from Stephens; but when he succumbed to nationalist feeling, he did it thoroughly: "Be they remembered of their land for aye, / Green be their graves and green their memory".

With his family, Stephens had moved to Paris in 1913, and there he stayed for about a year, writing *The Demi-Gods*. In this novel we find the usual commingling of mortals and immortals, with the resulting picturesque group of travellers that contributed a new motif to Irish fiction. Eimer O'Duffy and Richard Rowley were among those who adapted it to their own purposes; and it turns up, c. 1939, in the children's stories of Patricia Lynch. It's natural, of course, that Stephens's singularity should attract imitators; what's inimitable about his work, though, is its zest. At times his prose is as decorative as a Toby jug; at others it is plain and pithy. A talent for aphoristic comment is one of his assets.

As far as the merits of his contemporaries were concerned, Stephens was apt to make eccentric judgments. He admired AE and Seumas O'Sullivan; he had no time at all for Pound or Eliot, and none for Joyce before 1927, at which time he and Joyce struck up an equivocal friendship. Stephens has left a diverting account of the earliest meeting between the two, in Dawson Street, Dublin, in 1912: there they stood, one very tall and the other very short, each more-or-less politely disparaging the other's achievements. Joyce, who began by advising Stephens to "give up writing and take to a good job like shoe-shining", came round, some years later, to a state of approval for his fellow-Dubliners. More than anything else, it was the coincidences surrounding the two of them that prompted his rounding of heart: their common Christian name, change of heart; their common Christian name, common place and date of birth (as far as anyone can tell); the character "Stephen" and the surname Stephens, and so on. All this encouraged him to put to Stephens the proposal that he should take over the writing of *Finnegans Wake*, if Joyce for any reason became unable

to complete the project. What especially appealed to him about the idea was the possibility of getting "JJ and S" (a contraction of John Jameson and Sons, the Irish Whiskey manufacturers) on to the title page. Stephens acceded to this peculiar proposition; however, after his initial enthusiasm had receded, nothing more was heard from Joyce on the subject.

By 1925, Stephens's instinctive anglophobia had been modified sufficiently to enable him to take up residence in a London suburb, and there he stayed for the rest of his life, apart from a period during the war when he and his wife took refuge in a disused chapel in Gloucestershire. High-spirited as ever, he had

no sooner arrived in England than he began contributing articles to the *Evening News* about the difficulties he was experiencing in finding his way around: "Leaving Trafalgar Square, I reached the Strand in nine buses".

Patricia McFate has diligently rounded up all of Stephens's stray journalistic pieces, thrown in a few rediscovered stories and added the texts of a couple of plays: in all this, no more than a trace of the author's usual exuberance and inspired frivolity is discernible. Literary and national topics, on the whole, make Stephens dull. We miss his virtuosity and aptitude for mimicry - and, above all, the quality he himself attributed to Lord Dunsany: "a vividly out-of-the-world imagination".

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## The carnival spirit

Virgil Nemoianu

ION CREANGĂ  
*Memoirs of My Boyhood and Stories and Tales*  
Translated by Ana Cartianu and R. C. Johnston  
352pp. Bucharest: Minerva

By 1875 Ion Creangă was a defrocked deacon, who had tried his hand at teaching but lived mostly in cheerful destitution in the outskirts of the city of Jassy. Between 1875 and 1881 he published his two main works - the *Tales* and the *Boyhood Memoirs* - and ten years later was well on the way to being recognized as a Romanian literary classic. This was fast promotion indeed, and it was due mostly to Creangă's friends at *Junimea*, the most influential literary coterie ever to function in Romanian literature. Almost single-handedly they established the nineteenth-century canon, and in 1867 they started a literary journal which survived for seventy-nine years at a level of constant excellence, as well as providing the country with half-a-dozen prominent statesmen, three of whom became prime minister. The leading figures of the group were young graduates who, in the early 1860s, brought back from their studies in Germany and France a heady mixture of new ideas: cosmopolitanism, moral scepticism, pragmatic conservatism. They saw the Romantic nationalism of their parents as the enemy and had a high time poking fun at the revered figures and clichés of the past. So what did they see in Creangă?

When Creangă started reading his manuscripts to the *Junimea* circle, all he had published were reading and writing primers for schoolchildren. He was a loud, jolly fellow with a gift for quick repartee and sly obscenities, a peasant's son from a secluded region of Moldavia, where the rural economy was prosperous and local traditions had been well preserved. He differed from many other country storytellers not only in being more educated, but also because, when urban modernization began in Romania he was neither hostile to it nor intimidated. He stuck to his rural subject-matter, but added to it a special self-consciousness which was, surely, a gesture towards his small, sophisticated, and Westernized audience at *Junimea*. What he did was to alter the balance somewhat within the traditional narratives and to change certain emphases so as to make the tales more ironic. The stories themselves were not especially innovative in subject, they used stock characters and

situations taken from folklore, and humorous elements were already present but Creangă's deft touches indicate his awareness that the audience was a new one and his intelligent complicity with it. The stories are earthy, interspersed with proverbs and idiomatic turns of phrase, and their atmosphere is one of boisterous festivity, full of close observation and sensual gratification. Death and the devil are repeatedly defeated and ridiculed. The *Memoirs* similarly have hardly a trace of sentimentality; they are a good-natured, humorous description of Creangă's difficulties and petty transgressions.

It is easy to see why the *Junimea* group were enthusiastic about him: they found in Creangă an utter lack of rhetoric, an ironic but respectful attitude towards reality, and an aesthetic use of linguistic and folk idiosyncrasy. For them, as for other readers, he seemed to have found the right balance between the serene and the adventurous, perhaps even a metaphorical model for how the change from a rural society could be carried out in an orderly way. The modernists who came later liked Creangă's

playful familiarity with fantasy and monsters, while the literary Left praised him mainly for his ethnographic realism. Like a lesser and belated Rabelais, Creangă offered a literary carnival in which every one could find some particular delight.

The present translation is a daring enterprise, because the dialectal texture of Creangă's language presents formidable obstacles. R. C. Johnston taught Romance Languages for many years at Westfield College, London, and Ana Cartianu is probably her country's most distinguished postwar English scholar (she is a former chairman of the English Department at Bucharest University). Their experience must have persuaded them to confine themselves to a straightforward version of the text, ignoring the more obscure nuances of Creangă's idioms. The English is thus lighter and arier than the Romanian, as if an oil-painting had been reproduced as a wood-engraving. The selection is excellent, though Creangă's delightful pornographic pieces would have added spice; unfortunately, even in Romania they are available only in private printings.

### Perpetual Motion

They're changing partners again, safely unseen  
(Or so they thought) on the other side of the wall  
Where death, dialing the defunct  
Phone numbers you still know by heart,  
Reaches an eternal dial tone.

Time out for a few last questions:  
Is there a unifying principle to these kisses and betrayals,  
Some heavenly conspiracy that controls such accidents  
So that they seem to make sense? Or are the players  
Just pieces in a Jackson Pollock jigsaw puzzle?

"Does the malevolence of nature console us  
Because, though innocent, we have never been good,  
Or do we recoil in horror  
From the grinning clown face on the back  
Of a cobra's extended hood?"

"No wonder we feel misunderstood.  
You can measure our velocity but not our location  
As we round the curve into the recent future,  
Afraid to say what we have seen  
Alone and together on the way."

DAVID LEHMAN



## Benefactors' benefactor

### Edward Abraham

**RAGNAR SOHLMAN**  
The Legacy of Alfred Nobel: The story behind the Nobel Prizes  
Translated by Elspeth Harley Schubert  
144pp. Bodley Head. £8.95.  
0370 309901

**PETER WILHELM**  
The Nobel Prize  
111pp. Windlesham: Springwood. £12.95.  
086254 1115

Ragnar Sohlman's very readable little book is a lucid and edited version of *En Testamente*, first published in Swedish in 1950. It has been produced now to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Nobel's birth.

The international character, the scope and monetary value of the Nobel Prizes and the grand occasion of their presentation in Stockholm for more than eighty years, have made them as well known as any prizes in history. But the life and personality of Nobel himself, who founded them from a fortune estimated to be the equivalent of £60 million in present-day currency, and the problems encountered in setting up the Nobel Foundation are not common knowledge.

Ragnar Sohlman was Nobel's personal assistant. He found himself, unexpectedly, named as an executor of his employer's will; and it was largely his loyalty and energy that enabled Nobel's wishes to be carried out. His book records personal memories of this major episode in his life and supplements an earlier work (H. Schück and R. Sohlman's *The Life of Alfred Nobel*, 1929) which includes a history of the Nobel family and accounts of Alfred Nobel's inventions.

Alfred Bernhard Nobel wrote his final will in Paris in November 1895, without the advice of a lawyer. His wish to reward merit and contribute to human welfare was clear, but the implementation of this wish was less simple than he had apparently supposed it would be. His instructions that prizes should be awarded to those who, during the last year shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind and that one prize should go to "the person who shall have produced in the field of literature the most outstanding work of an idealistic tendency" were almost recipes for controversy in the awarding bodies and in wider circles. His commendable wish that "no consideration whatever shall be given to the nationality of the candidates" was not universally applauded in

Sweden, where it was thought by some to be unpatriotic. And his decision that a prize for "champions of peace" should be awarded by a Committee of the Norwegian Storting caused some unease, because there was tension between Sweden and Norway, whose Union was soon to be dissolved.

All this, together with the attitude of members of the Nobel family, with problems arising from the spread of Alfred Nobel's assets among nine European countries and the uncertainty of his legal domicile, caused some reluctance on the part of the Swedish Academy of Sciences, the Caroline Institute and the Swedish Academy to accept the responsibility that had been laid upon them for awarding prizes in chemistry, physics, medicine and literature.

The will is understandable in terms of the different facets of the testator's character. The Nobel family came of Swedish peasant stock and took its name from the commune of Nöbbelö. It produced several members of unusual ability and initiative. Emmanuel Nobel, Alfred's father, had found it difficult to make his way in Sweden and emigrated to Finland in 1837 and then to St Petersburg. He returned after twenty years, leaving his eldest sons,

Robert and Ludwig, in Russia. Before this, Alfred had become a cosmopolitan, an idealist and a self-educated chemist. He was said to find pleasure in Shelley and the Norwegian poets; and he was about to be the inventor of dynamite and new detonators, and to become an industrialist of major importance.

Nobel never married, suffered at times from melancholia, and once wrote to a lady: "Cupid's arrows have been inadequately replaced by cannon." But, in addition to his mother, at least two women, both Viennese, had a significant place in his life. With one, the young and light-headed Sofie Hess, who had worked in a florist's shop, the relationship began as an infatuation but later became a liability when she posed as Madame Nobel. The other, Bertha Sophie Felicitas, Countess Kinsky von Chinic und Tettau, who later became Baroness von Suttner, was a beautiful but impoverished woman of culture. For a brief period she was Nobel's secretary in Paris, but during his absence she returned to Vienna to a secret marriage.

Nevertheless, Bertha von Suttner and Nobel remained warm friends. She became a dedicated worker for peace and in 1905 was

awarded a Nobel Prize. There can be little doubt that their friendship had some influence on Nobel's decision in 1893 to endow a peace prize, but they did not seem to agree on how a permanent state of peace was most likely to be achieved and their differing views bring to mind some of those voiced today. Nobel's idealism was diluted with realism. He wrote to her: "My factories may end war sooner than your Congresses. The day when two army corps will be able to destroy each other in one second and all civilized nations will recoil with horror and disband their armies." He thought of a league of nations prepared to use force. About her idea of a specialist newspaper for peace propaganda he wrote: "I might as well throw my money out of the window."

Nobel's decision to distribute only a small proportion of his fortune among relatives and friends was entirely consistent with his views on inheritance. With reference to children, he said: "It is a mistake to hand over to them considerable sums of money beyond what is necessary for their education. To do so encourages laziness and impedes the healthy capacity of the individual to make an independent position for himself." Not surprisingly, the effect of these sentiments was unwelcome to members of the Nobel family. A threat to contest the will and fear that the estate might become subject to the jurisdiction of a French court, impelled Sohlman hurriedly to transfer Nobel's bank deposits in Paris to London and Stockholm, carrying them to the Gare du Nord in a home-cab with a drawn revolver to ward off robbers. More than a year passed before negotiations with the family were brought to a satisfactory conclusion and the way to the implementation of the will was open.

Sohlman's friendship with Alfred Nobel and his involvement in the implementation of the will gives his book a permanent historical value. For those who would want a brief account of the Nobel story almost to the present day, presented in a more popular format and accompanied by an occasional amusing anecdote and many coloured photographs, there is Peter Wilhelm's *The Nobel Prize*.

Nobel's fortune, though large, was not immense, and in restricting a benefaction to the award of a limited number of substantial prizes he made it a focus of public interest. One thing is certain: despite the early complaints that he had shown lack of patriotism and placed a heavy and inappropriate burden on the Swedish academies, his gift has been good for Sweden.



Alfred Ehrenstam's photograph of the Nobel Prize ceremony in Stockholm in 1929. Thomas Mann is on the extreme right in the first row behind the speaker.

## Jumping to conceptions

### J. Bruce Brackenridge

**R. ARIS, H.T. DAVIS and R.H. STUEVER**  
(Editors)  
*Spring of Scientific Creativity: Essays on founders of modern science.*  
342pp. University of Minnesota Press. \$32.50.  
08166 10878

As a seventeenth-century proponent of the empirical method, Sir Francis Bacon would have been taken aback by the thought of "scientific creativity". For him, the rules of the game required a strictly objective collecting of a huge amount of neutral data from which would automatically emerge the laws of nature, like Athena emerging fully grown from the head of Zeus in the twentieth century; the mathematician and cultural commentator Jacob Bronowski has credited the inventor of a scientific theory with the same degree of "creativity" as one would accord the author of a play. Between these two views, the preface to this work claims, lies "a wealth, not to say welter, of insights into the subject of creativity and scientific progress: Arthur Koestler's analogy with humor; Roger Abelson's "creative leaps"; Sir Karl Popper's "falsification verification" and even Thomas Kuhn's "paradigm shifts" are not categorically separable.

To escape from, or perhaps to rise above, such a welter of philosophical creativity concerning scientific creativity, the editors of this collection propose "a refreshing way to approach this question would be a biographical

look at a selection of scientists and mathematicians". Their expressed hope and expectation is that these dozen essays "will lead to further insight into the creative springs of the scientific enterprise".

The essays were originally presented as a series of lectures at the University of Minnesota and then rewritten for publication. They appear in chronological order of subject-matter, beginning with Galileo and falling bodies and ending with John von Neuman and computers. They range in length from fifteen pages to seventy-one, the shortest being devoted to a comparison of the creative style of Blaise Pascal to a "hard-nosed American inventor" with that of Thomas Mann's Adrian Leverkühn, a fictional German composer driven to insanity by syphilis, the longest to a biography of James Clerk Maxwell, which includes such details as his seventeenth-century forebear who "was sent down (from Glasgow University) for an entanglement with a servant girl". The rest of the essays are all about twenty-five pages in length, but they vary widely in quality. The best speak directly to scientific creativity and offer the reflections of leading scholars on the subjects of their prime interest, e.g. Richard S. Westfall on Sir Isaac Newton, Martin J. Klein on Josiah Willard Gibbs, and Stanley Goldberg on Albert Einstein. At the other end of the spectrum, one finds a rambling reminiscence of von Neuman's work at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton during the 1940s, replete with all the little anecdotes that abound in bad biographies and offering nothing by way of insight into von Neuman's creativity.

Even in the best essays there is no consensus concerning creativity. As Westfall notes, it is appropriate that the title should have the plural "springs" and not the restrictive singular "spring", for the sources of scientific creativity as revealed by these essays are quite diverse.

The opening essay by Thomas B. Settle on Galileo and his early experiments with falling bodies does not discuss the "Leaning Tower of Pisa Effect" (heavy and light bodies fall to the ground in the same time), but rather what the author calls the "Galileo Effect" (Galileo's claim that when light and heavy objects are dropped simultaneously, the light one initially moves ahead of the heavy object but that the latter eventually overtakes the former). After an interesting but tangential report on the author's own current research into physiological causes for such an effect, he concludes that Galileo's "considerable talent for empirical research... and the persistence with which he perfected it... were at the core of his productive scientific life".

In contrast, Westfall concentrates on a specific topic, the "creative leap" made by Newton between Halley's visit to him in August 1684, which provided the impetus to return to his work on planetary motion, and the completion of the *Principia* in 1687. "It is a compelling story of creative genius at work, constantly expanding his conception of the work in which he was engaged." Westfall never loses track of his mission as he skillfully guides us through the maze of Newton's creation of the monumental generalization of the concept of universal gravitation. He concludes, however, that it is a tale

without equal because of Newton's sheer genius. Nevertheless, Westfall claims for Newton, as Settle does for Galileo, "that what made his genius productive was a rare capacity for sustained concentration".

The essays on James Prescott Joule (1818-89) and James Clerk Maxwell (1831-79) also offer interesting similarities and contrasts. The former is remembered for his experimental work and the latter for his theoretical work. One is described as "a private man", the other as "a quiet and rather silent man". Joule's correspondence is described as "entirely innocent of references to philosophical issues, whether relative to science or not", while with Maxwell it is just the reverse: "The more one reads of Maxwell the clearer it becomes how philosophical convictions that he reached early in his career influenced and fruited his scientific ideas." On a much less relevant issue, both essayists make specific reference to the nineteenth-century use of the word *physicist* as it relates to their subject; both describe it as having been "coined by William Whewell in 1840". In the final analysis, this common description alone links the disparate creative contributions of the two men.

Without imposing any rigid definition of creative "springs", the editors thus allow one to peruse the various essays according to taste (remarkably, there are no women included). The value of this collection is in the splendid glimpses it gives into the creativity of a Newton or an Einstein, and for these moments it must be praised. For the most part, however, the elusive springs of creativity of the individual scientist remain hidden.

## Observing the conventions

### Michael Slote

**STUART HAMPSHIRE**  
*Morality and Conflict*  
175pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.  
0631 133364

It is useful to have the essays of *Morality and Conflict*—all but one of which have appeared in some form previously—collected in one volume. If current moral philosophy seems to have emerged from an earlier strait-jacket of semantic and epistemological preoccupations, some of the credit undoubtedly lies with Sir Stuart Hampshire; and the present collection exhibits a concern to relate moral philosophy to a realistic moral psychology and a larger philosophy of individual human life that have long been characteristic of Hampshire's work. But its most distinctive contribution emerges from a relatively new emphasis, in the introduction and the final two chapters, on the moral significance of social conventions.

In some areas of morality we hope for a convergence of evaluations: to the extent that we accept a given principle of justice, for example, we are inclined to affirm its validity for other societies where it may not in fact be recognized. But Hampshire believes that such cross-cultural moral standards (or aspirations) do not exhaust our moral sensibility. Contrary to most current philosophical opinion, he holds that some moral values need not be and in fact are not treated as having cross-cultural validity. Although certain moral standards having to do, among other things, with the family, friendship and sexual behaviour are constrained by general considerations of justice and human welfare, they cannot be justified in general terms, but require, he says, a distinctive kind of holistic/historical justification that underlines their variability, their conventional nature. Consider, for example, our own attitudes to certain prohibitions concerning the "disposal" of the dead. We feel a deep repugnance at the idea of violating these prohibitions, but, in contrast to our feelings about maiming and killing, we do not, it seems, insist that people in other societies are necessarily wrong, if their conventions for treating the dead conflict with our own. Yet our lack of repugnance at other people's conventions does not make us reject our own conventional prohibitions as

superstitious, gratuitous, or less than morally binding upon us.

Hampshire makes a strong case for the existence of culturally variable standards as part of our ordinary moral thought about the world, and he also offers a number of possible justifications for such standards. In different places he appeals to loyalty to one's past, to the need for a sense of identity and to the value of culturally distinctive ways of life as possible justifications for particular social or cultural conventions. But some of these justifications take (or can take) a consequentialist form, and for that very reason threaten to undercut the attitude of those, for example, who treat prohibitions against certain ways of treating the dead as *prohibitions*. (If such prohibitions are justified by their tendency to preserve a valuable way of life, why shouldn't we disregard them whenever doing so would marginally contribute to preserving that way of life or the prohibitions themselves?) On the other hand, Hampshire's appeal to loyalty threatens the distinctiveness of culturally variable conventional prohibitions by relating them to a universally applicable moral standard. (The appeal to the agent's sense of his identity seems to face both these problems.) At one point Hampshire seems willing to allow that conventional prohibitions are justifiable in the same terms as other moral claims, but that in this area we run out of precise rational argument a good deal sooner than we do in arguing about justice and human welfare. This, again, would make conventional moral standards appear far less distinctive than Hampshire at other times might wish us to believe, but at the very least the discussion forces us to take conventional moral values seriously and raises important issues about how such values are to be justified or explained.

Hampshire's views about conventional moral standards also represent part of a continuing critique of those moral philosophies, among them utilitarianism, which he believes oversimplify the moral life; and an extended argument against utilitarianism in particular runs through several of the essays of *Morality and Conflict*. The considerations brought to bear against it are rich and varied; but sometimes difficult to evaluate. Hampshire criticizes utilitarianism for leading those who accept and follow it to a less interesting, less creative form of existence, but he does not explicitly mention

those utilitarians who hold that there may well be good utilitarian reasons for people not to guide their lives by utilitarian morality and it is not clear how Hampshire could effectively reply to this position. (It is not enough to say that any valid criterion of right and wrong action must have a practical function, for that is precisely what many contemporary utilitarians, and others, would wish to question.) Hampshire also criticizes utilitarianism for being too simple a theory, but present-day (act-)utilitarianism, with its different levels of moral thinking and its different objects of consequentialist evaluation, is in fact a highly complex theory, and, again, partly because he does not cite the recent literature, it is not clear how successful Hampshire's line of criticism really is.

*Morality and Conflict* discusses a wide variety of other topics. Chapter Two, for example, contains a penetrating discussion of the contrasting aims and moral methodologies of Aristotle and Spinoza; Chapter Three usefully connects individual and political morality; and the final, title chapter not only defends the idea of conventional, socially variable moral claims, but also argues that the richness of particular conventions exacerbates the conflicts that any individual will face within a given society or culture. Sir Isaiah Berlin and others have questioned the ideal of "the good life" by pointing out the impossibility of realizing all the virtues and values we honour within a single lifetime. (Even a so-called balanced life will miss out on virtues and goods that can only be achieved by intensely concentrating on some things to the exclusion of others. There is no way to avoid specialization.) But these previous discussions have focused on the inevitable loss or failure of values founded in general human nature, and Hampshire seeks to reinforce this sense of unavoidable conflict and loss by pointing out the existence of conventional values whose realization is restricted to those who participate in a given way of life. If, as Hampshire believes, there are limits to the number and variety of conventions the particular individual can participate in at any given time or throughout a lifetime, then we are inevitably limited not only in our achievement of basic human values but, also, in the realization of conventional-dependent cultural and social goods. It will be interesting to see how moral philosophers respond to Hampshire's subtle and many-sided treatment of this topic.

## Channel crossing

### Peregrine Horden

**ALAN MONTEFIORE** (Editor)  
*Philosophy in France Today*  
272pp. Cambridge University Press. £20.  
(paperback £5.95).  
0521 296730

"Continental philosophy" is an invention; a technique, rather like the Orientalism denounced by Edward Said, for lumping together and excluding systems of thought we do not care to understand. It was invented when Russell and Moore repudiated Hegel and the Channel was covered by a transcendental fog. The "analytic" or "logical empiricist" philosophy since developed in England and America has identified a few European kindred spirits—Wittgenstein and Frege, of course; also Brentano, Meinong, Popper and the Vienna Circle. But the distinction Wittgenstein drew, in the *Philosophical Remarks* of 1930, between that philosophy which builds ever larger, more complex (ie, nebulous) structures and the English strain which humbly strives for clarity and perspicuity, has remained broadly convincing to orthodox analytic eyes.

Accesses might engender, a number of heroic mediators—Charles Taylor, Richard Rorty, Paul Ricoeur and Alan Montefiore among them—are attempting to make the insights of the major European philosophical schools analytically intelligible and compelling. The collection now edited by Montefiore

admirably complements Vincent Descombes's conspectus of *Modern French Philosophy*, and has the merit of allowing the philosophers to speak for themselves. Some of them find this freedom distinctly embarrassing. The editor's request that they describe the nature of their work with an English audience in mind produces several assertions of inability to say what philosophy is, or even how their work is to be recognized as "their own", as well as some apocalyptic pronouncements on philosophy's future. Comparatively few take the opportunity to reproduce work in progress. In their evasiveness however, they tell us a good deal about the nature of a discipline which still takes seriously the "purely" transcendental problems of the Kantian subject, and yet which is also deeply reluctant to acknowledge any decisive boundary between its own discourse and those of history, politics and literature.

This tends to confirm Descombes's report, that the generation known after 1945 as that of the "three H's" (Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger), has yielded dominance to the generation known since 1960 as that of the three "masters of suspicion"—Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. Yet it would be wrong to suppose that French philosophy has lost all confidence in philosophical method, and necessarily collapses into socialism, psychoanalysis or deconstruction. Indeed, so far as deconstruction is concerned, the second merit of this collection is to shift the emphasis away from Derrida, the current master of those who suspect, (Derrida's work does not, after all, lack English translation or exegetical aid), and his formal defence of his *théorie de la différance*, which he is represented here, shows something of his past alienation from the philosophical scene.)

The collection is thus more than another

diatribe against the "metaphysics of presence". For all their anguish about the nature and purpose of philosophy—an anguish which is, overall, probably less extreme than Wittgenstein's—the contributors nevertheless succeed in conveying the vigour and prodigality of recent French philosophy. Inevitably, a certain amount of what they say would not be admitted as genuinely philosophical in an analytic debate. There are several pieces of generalized sociological theory: Pierre Bourdieu, Descombes and Pierre Macherey—all in a Rorty-esque vein—on the institutions of philosophy itself; Louis Marin—turning back to Pascal—on justice, force, and their respective discourses. But there are also several contributions—by Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas, Claude Lefort and Jean François Lyotard—which explicitly derive their orientation from the strategies of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Finally, there are two relative "loners", Jean-Toussaint Desanti reports on his philosophy of mathematics; Jacques Bouveresse, the doyen of French analytic philosophers, scorns the obscurantist waffle produced by his contemporaries and looks to Frege for solace.

In that Bouveresse is both unfair and untypical: unfair, because in comparison with Derrida most of the contributors are paragons of lucidity; and untypical, not because of his allegiance, but because he actually debates with his colleagues. The others tend to continue with their great predecessors, from Aristotle to Merleau-Ponty. And they would normally do so at book length ("as soon as there is one sentence, there are several", Lyotard reminds us), not, as here, in pieces short enough for *The Journal of Philosophy*. That aside, it is hard to see that the collection could have been better conceived or executed.

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# Including the irrational

## Graham Bradshaw

STEPHEN BOOTH  
*King Lear, Macbeth, Indefinition, and Tragedy*  
183pp. Yale University Press. £15.  
030028504

As Lafew observes in *All's Well*, "we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge when we should submit to an unknown fear." Trifling with the terrors of *Macbeth* might seem hard, but we have often been told to observe its "tetralogy-like pattern", in which the Evil of killing the King leads the outraged Powers to bring about a reassuringly inevitable triumph of Good – like Victor Hugo's Providence, when Napoleon upsets the Balance of the Universe.

But the Tillyardian, providentialist reading of Shakespeare's tetralogies has itself been thoroughly dismantled by H. A. Kelly, Wilbur Sanders and others. Much recent Shakespeare criticism has been concerned to show how frequently critical debates correspond with, and try to short-circuit, opposed energies and perspectives within the plays; Norman Rabkin's *Shakespeare and the Problem of Meaning* brilliantly shows how the plays' intensely involving

imaginative effect both depends on "kinds of complexity that resist interpretative simplification" and explains the urge to simplify. Stephen Booth, a colleague of Rabkin's at Berkeley, is no less opposed to attempts to reduce and limit radically subversive imaginative energies, and argues in this timely, challenging study that "theories of tragedy" are so important to us because they "keep us from facing tragedy itself": the word *tragedy* is an emergency measure, an "intellectual life preserver" with which we ensconce ourselves into seeming knowledge, on being confronted with "limitlessness" and "indefiniteness".

Aristotle's account of what tragedy is, or should be, stipulates that "Everything irrational should, if possible, be excluded", to which Booth replies: "Tragedies do not exclude the irrational, they include it; Aristotle's favorite model, *Oedipus Rex*, is proof against him." Shrewdly, Booth suggests that part of the appeal of the *Poetics* is that Aristotle wants to believe, as audiences want to believe, "that the comprehensibility given to tragic events by the comprehending – the encompassing – framework of the play is in the nature of the events themselves".

Like critics, characters in *Macbeth* and especially *Lear* "constantly and vainly strive to establish the limits of things", and to make their experiences conform to notions of mean-

ing and value. The defining qualities of "merciless Macdonwald" and "brave Macbeth" only "become confused as a direct result of the Captain's adjectival insistence on the definition": Booth might have added that of Duncan's various attempts to impose order on horror none is more ludicrously exposed than his wish to see the Captain's unseemly unseam as a "worthy gentleman". And in "Edgar's desperate efforts to classify and file human experience, Shakespeare tantalizes us with the comfort to be had from ideologically Procrustean beds to which he refuses to tailor his matter".

That refusal is of course a crucial part of the "matter", above all when Cordelia dies. But this helps to justify what Booth recognizes, ruefully, as his own "theory of tragedy", which emphasizes "inconclusiveness" or indefiniteness while attending very closely to the various ways in which *Lear* and *Macbeth* achieve imaginative and structural coherence, or definition. Such a theory is attractive, and not paradoxical, if we agree that we feel "the presence of an encompassing order in the work (as opposed to the world it describes)". Indeed, I think Booth might have gone further, and shed more light on why Cordelia's death is so shocking, if he had said more of Shakespeare's habit of actually calling attention to his own carefully tailored refusals to tailor. Booth brings out very well the remorseless way in which Shakespeare

emphasizes the contingency of Cordelia's death: Edmund might have spoken sooner, Lear himself might have saved her. That is part of our pain – but so is our sense that what is accidental and meaningless within the world of the play is also contrived, and meant; the dramatist has chosen not to spare us this, and makes us aware of the path he did not take.

In *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare does take the path which allows final restitutions but still stresses, through elaborate reflexive ironies, that the comforts are no less contrived; we do not "hoot" as we might at "an old tale", but why not? Paulina's triumphant speech reminds us that the miracle is a trick of art – hers within the play, but really Shakespeare's – and reflexive irony implicates us, quizzing our responses. Booth compares the final scenes of *Lear* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, to show how both plays subvert generic expectations and conventions of dramatic closure; but he doesn't pursue the parallel between accidents which are contingent eruptions within the world of each play but also carefully contrived conclusions. By contriving to admit contingency the play makes its world seem more than ever like our own, and provides another vantage from which to consider Booth's admirable distinction between the encompassing order of the work and the alarming indefiniteness of the world it describes.

## Working on the edge

### Piers Gray

ELOISE KNAPP HAY  
*T. S. Eliot's Negative Way*  
214pp. Harvard University Press. £14.  
067424675

A psychopathology of contemporary academic criticism might mention, in passing, Faust's Syndrome or the fantasy of omniscience. It would be unfair – perhaps – to suggest that Eloise Knapp Hay is a victim of this fantasy. However, despite her commitment to the negative way of Eliot's poetry and the "rather difficult theology" behind it, there are moments when her prose has a rather too positive way with itself: "The point that has seldom, if ever, been made is . . .". "No one has sufficiently emphasized the distinction . . .". "An irony always missed . . .". But it would be misleading to dwell on such certainty: the book's character is in its commitment to arguments.

Professor Hay's central thesis is that Eliot's verse moves from a negative sense of the negative (a scepticism bordering on pyrrhonism before 1926) towards an affirmation of the *via negativa* in one's journey towards God. She is thus resolute in refusing to see the poetic negotiations of *The Waste Land* as rehearsals for Eliot's later Christian verse; however, from "Ash Wednesday" on, she argues, Eliot's verse moves towards its *summa* of *Four Quartets* guided by both Eastern and Western mystical traditions. Her chapter on the *Quartets* is therefore particularly helpful in leading the uninitiated reader through the complexities of St John of the Cross, distinguishing the different "nights" of the search for "divine union": the "dark night of sense and the dark night of the soul", the night of the initiate and the night of the saint.

In so far as Hay concentrates upon specific analyses of different religious texts, her work is illuminating. But unfortunately there is simultaneously a sense of something being not quite right, as in, for example, the following:

In 1946 Heidegger, answering the question, "What Are Poets For?" writes: "The venture to set free what is ventured, in such a way indeed that it sets free what is thing free into nothing other than a drawing toward the center. Drawing this way, the venture ever and always brings the ventured towards itself in this drawing."

This is poor stuff, yet Hay quotes it with approval: it seems that there is a matter of discrimination to be considered here. For later, in her chapter on "Ash Wednesday" (which contains an excellent account of Eliot's arguments with I. A. Richards over poetry and beliefs), she quotes the following:

His [Valéry's] was, I think, a profoundly destructive mind, even nihilistic. This danger . . . after our opinion of the poetry. But I should, I think, in our admiration of the man who wrings the

poetry. For the agony of creation, for a mind like Valéry's, must be very great. When the mind constantly mocks and dissuades, and urges that creative activity is vain, then the slow genesis of a poem . . . [i]s only possible by a separate heroism which is a triumph of character.

That, of course, is Eliot. As Hay rightly points out, we learn as much about the author here as about the subject and, one might add, a great deal more about poets and what they are "for".

A sense of unease, then, has to be accounted for. Perhaps it lies in the contrast between the following two passages. First, the opening sentence of the Introduction: "The single volume that makes up the complete poems and plays of T. S. Eliot presents an enormous challenge to critical theory." We can assent to this, even if we hesitate before the isolated concept of "critical theory"; but what are we to make of the following?

In these three years [1911 to 1914] . . . he did more than scratch the surface of Indian thought. He studied the *Pancha-Tantra* and Bhagavad-Gita, as well as the sacred books of Buddhism – the Jātakas, Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the *Anguttara Nikāya* (Legends of the Buddhist Saints), selected dialogues of the Buddha, Pantanjali's *Sātras* with the *Bhāṣya* and the *Yānikā*, and the Commentary of Vachaspati-Mishra – all in the original language.

In what possible way can this – as it stands – offer any help to the reader or any challenge to critical theory? On the contrary, it is in its practical disregard for the enormous challenge of Eliot's work that Hay's book makes one uneasy. For consider this: "He [Eliot] agreed with Bradley (against the extreme idealists) that appearances are as 'real' as what lies behind them, and this contrasts strongly with the 'Unreal City' we see later in *The Waste Land*." But for Bradley nothing lies behind appearances: there are only appearances and their degrees of reality. Or again, of the following lines from "Le Directeur": "Malheur à la malheureuse Tamise / Qui coule si près du Spectateur". Hay writes: "The 'reactionary' commercial agents of *The Spectator* go touring airtight in arm past a small girl, Tamise, pugnacious and in rage."

The point is this: to what extent can we share in Professor Hay's response to this challenge Eliot's poetry offers? That it is a challenge cannot be denied, I think; for in reading the poems we are constantly being drawn into worlds with which we may be unfamiliar. When responding to it and to them (and to the coincidental criticism) we are working on the edge of interpretative truth; and in attempting thus to understand "truth" we can do worse than to appreciate Eliot's own observations on our fallibility:

Without pursuing that curious and obscure problem of the meaning of interpretation farther, it occurs to me as possible that there may be an essential part of error in all interpretation, without which it would not be interpretation at all . . .

## The autobiographer as hero

### Peter Gay

RICHARD WAGNER  
*My Life*  
Translated by Andrew Gray, edited by Mary Whittall  
366pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.  
0521229294

Among Richard Wagner's dramatic productions, the greatest was probably himself. He was so thoroughly composed, as purged of undesirable infelicities and laden with resounding dioxanes, as any of his music dramas. That sounds obvious almost to banality, until one recognizes the effort and ingenuity that Wagner put into the presentation of his own life. In his autobiography, he was writing for others, for Cosima von Bülow, for Ludwig II, and (as Pierre Boulez was not the first to note) for posterity.

Now, with this efficiently translated and sensibly annotated edition of *My Life*, the urgency of Wagner's self-promoting campaign stands out for English-speaking readers more plainly than ever. Based on Martin Gregor-Dellin's authoritative edition of *Mein Leben*, this volume deserves to rank as the definitive reading version for all but the most impassioned scholars of Wagner's life. In a round-up of recent books on Wagner in the *New York Review of Books*, Joseph Kerman has suggested that what still remains to be done is an edition "checking Wagner's account of the best point by point". The suspiciousness that this suggestion embodies is striking and just, though I suppose that *Wagner-Kenner* would probably not fail to spot the omissions, distortions and outright falsifications that pervade *My Life*.

And they do pervade it. Wagner's unwillingness, almost inability, to tell the truth about himself is so palpable that even the publisher has been driven to an exceptional outburst of candour. The blurb confesses: "Given the intended readership and the circumstances of its composition" – and Cambridge University Press might well have added "and Wagner's character" – it is "hardly surprising that Wagner should either omit or distort facts from time to time: he does not linger over previous affairs (his feelings for Mathilde Wesendonck are barely hinted at), he portrays his relationship with his first wife, Minna, as a good deal more distant than it really was, and he plays down his involvement in the Dresden uprising of 1849." Wagner's *My Life*, then, is far less the life of the real Richard Wagner than the life he thought his mistress, his patron and his adoring world would want to hear about. A biographer, Sigmund Freud once said, lives in perpetual danger of falling in love with his subject. It is a danger that Richard Wagner, writing about himself, consistently courted.

Wagner's self-adulation is not always gross. He praises himself lavishly, to be sure: copying the scores "of the masters I loved", he notes early on, he "acquired the graceful handwriting so much admired in later life", and there is much more to the same effect. At the same time, though, displaying considerable cunning, he does not omit what Cosima von Bülow was to call some "unedifying memories". But Wagner, as it were, places the warts on his self-portrait with such finesse that we are invited to admire the whole face all the more. He recalls getting drunk and misbehaving, or scoring Beethoven's *Battle of Vittoria* with such élan that he drove everyone, in panic-stricken stampede, from the theatre. Again, living in Paris in 1841 (to give a trivial but telling instance), very much out of the public eye, he is irritated by a pianist living next door, who continually practices Liszt's fantasy on *Lucia di Lammermoor*, in revenge, of self-defence, Wagner moves his "thrillingly out of tune" piano up against his neighbour's wall, and asks a friend to accompany him on the piccolo in the overture to *La Favorita*; this, Wagner confesses, "seems to have greatly terrified my neighbour, a young piano teacher", who in fact moved out. And Wagner, triumphant, "felt somewhat ashamed", while he expects his readers to smile with him.

It all sounds the once again of Freud: of a personality sent to Arnold Zweig in 1936: "However, becomes, a biographer commits himself to lies, concealments, hypocrisy, prettification and even denying his lack of understanding, for biographical truth is unavailable, and if we had it, it would be useless." We might resist this appraisal as far too pessimistic, as prompted by the shadow of old age and of Hitler's nightmare world, and try to think of biographies that blunt, or refute, Freud's denunciation. But Richard Wagner's biography of Richard Wagner lends it a good deal of substance.

Wagner's programmatic unreliability raises the inconvenient question of just what value this idealized self-portrait can claim as a historical document. A closely printed volume of about 750 pages which describes the first fifty-five years of a composer and conductor who had been everywhere and knew everybody is bound to contain fascinating glimpses of famous faces and dramatic incidents. And here *My Life* does not disappoint its readers. Composers, singers, impresarios, patrons, music dealers and publishers crowd the pages, as do circumstantial accounts of Wagner's progress in composition and instrumentation, premières, travels, encounters with Meyerbeer, Halévy and other Jews, the death of beloved dogs and (this in much detail) the course of tedious colds, swollen nose and all. This very copiousness lends these pages an air of authenticity.

Yet the authenticity is largely specious. In manufacturing a persona for himself, Wagner does not scruple to dramatize, or wholly invent, incidents that will help the hero along the way to immortality. We now know, as Kerman reminds us, that Wagner "falsified two of his alleged musical epiphanies which linked him to Beethoven – his hearing of Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient as Leonore in *Fidelio* (which did not happen in 1829) and his attendance at Paris rehearsals of the Ninth Symphony (ditto in 1839)". It is one thing for a self-promoting autobiographer to tone down his radicalism and minimize an earlier love affair because

he knows that a king and a new mistress will be reading him. It is something else, and far more troubling, to have him play games with the decisive emotional moments in his life.

What *My Life* loses in validity as an objective source is matched by its corresponding gains as a subjective revelation. There is surely nothing very mysterious about an artist seeking to ingratiate himself with those whose goodwill he craves and needs. There is nothing calling for subtle psychological interpretation in the spectacle of someone taking every opportunity he can to put himself in a favourable light and settling scores with real or imagined enemies along the way. But the kind of reshaping of emotionally significant moments which pockmarks *My Life* suggests something more than policy; it hints at the pressure of an obsession.

I can only speculate about this hidden impulsion, but my conjecture fits, I think, what we know of Wagner's character and lifelong preoccupations. The strenuous sculpting of his life reads to me like an instance of what psychoanalysts call the family romance. This fantasy, widespread among the young and gifted, denies that the fantasist's parents are his real parents, and substitutes for them, especially for the father, someone distinguished or celebrated or at least free from unpleasant traits. The family romance in the normal course of events yields to pressures of reality, but some harbour it all their lives. Beethoven was one of these. It had, of course, long been familiar to Beethoven's biographers that he would insist, even after seeing incontrovertible documentary proof to the contrary, that he had been born not in 1770 but in 1772. But it was the merit of Maynard Solomon's *Beethoven* to show this to be part of Beethoven's unconscious strategy of replacing his drunken, unsuccessful father with someone else.

Now, Richard Wagner had – or thought he had – pressing reasons for denying his father

or, rather, the man he thought to be his father, the actor and painter Ludwig Geyer, his mother's second husband, and his affectionate stepfather. But Geyer, Wagner believed, was Jewish, and his need to deny that he himself had "Jewish blood" in his veins was to become one of his driving passions. Robert Gutman and other biographers have frequently (and, it seems to me, plausibly) suggested that this urge is one source, perhaps the main source, of Wagner's ruthless, murderous, but inconsistent anti-Semitism: the man who wished that all Jews be burned to death at a performance of Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* was also the man who could surround himself with Jewish adorners and bestow on them his condescending and exploitative friendship. In the second sentence of *My Life*, Wagner explicitly calls Friedrich Wagner "my father", but he seems to have been unsure of the truth of this assertion. That he was called "Richard Geyer" all through his boyhood can only have strengthened this uncertainty. In Wagner, then, the family romance took the paradoxical twist of the fantasy that his legal father was also his actual father – a fantasy made no less unsettling for having possibly been true. This paradox is accompanied by a second one: there seems to have been no reason to believe that Geyer was of Jewish origin. But Wagner seems to have thought so, and that is what matters.

Wagner's need, then, to purge himself of his "taint" readily combined with, or helped to shape, his urgent need to appear as more or less perfect, to become worthy of his glowing self-portrait which he tried to impose on others. If I am right, this gives poignant relevance to Wagner's adoration of Beethoven and his declared filiation to the man he worshipped as the greatest of composers: what the two had in common most profoundly was less their music than their fantasy life. It is an intriguing thought.

Now, Richard Wagner had – or thought he had – pressing reasons for denying his father

## A very Prussian misfit

### S. S. Praver

JOACHIM MAASS  
*Kleist: A Biography*  
Translated by Ralph Manheim  
313pp. Secker and Warburg. £12.95.  
043627005

Readers of the original version of Joachim Maass's biography of Kleist (*Kleist, die Fackel Preussens*, Munich 1957) are in for a pleasant surprise with this volume. The verbal inflation, the over-indulgence in metaphorical flights of fancy, which some of us found so disturbing in 1957, have all but disappeared. Whole paragraphs of rhetoric have been cut away, along with a large number of sentences, half-sentences and phrases, and what is left constitutes an eminently readable narrative of Kleist's life with just enough account of his work to make non-German readers understand those qualities which German readers and theatre-goers have found so uniquely fascinating. The tragic story of Kleist's many attempts to add lustre to an already illustrious family name as an army officer, as a civil servant, as an editor of journals, and as an agitator against Napoleon's occupation of German soil, is told as fully as the many gaps in contemporary records and Kleist's own love of mystification, will allow. Maass shows very well how temperament and history combined to drive Kleist into failure, psychosomatic illnesses, and – ultimately – suicide at the age of thirty-four; but he brings out no less clearly the character-traits, the circumstances and the events which helped to shape his greatness as a dramatist and a writer of prose tales and sketches. There have been good English translations of some of Kleist's major works, notably the short stories, and distinguished scholars, from Walter Silz to John Ellis and Denis Dyer, have interpreted these works for English-speaking readers – but these works for English-speaking readers – but a straightforward biography has been a long felt want.

Maass bases his narrative on sources made available by earlier scholars; documents which have been most conveniently assembled and edited by Helmut Sembdner in a series of

publications that include the Hanser Verlag's *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* (revised edition 1961), *Heinrich von Kleists Lebensspuren* (1957) and *Heinrich von Kleists Nachtrüm* (1967). He has not, as far as I can see, attempted the kind of detective-work which Hermann Reske recently did when he examined Swiss parish records and local newspapers and came up with evidence that makes a revision of the chapter headed "Island Idyll" in Maass's book urgently necessary. He is somewhat cavalier about textual cruces: when he makes Kleist say that *Penthesilea* contained "all the suffering and all the radiance of my soul" he neglects to tell us that modern editors prefer the reading "Schmutz" ("filth") to the older editors' "Schmerz" ("pain") or "suffering". In other places he seems to have misinterpreted existing evidence. It seems to me unjustifiable, for instance, to infer from Kleist's letter of September 14, 1800 that the writings of Goethe, Schiller and Wieland were *forbidden* in Catholic Würzburg. What Kleist is saying, rather, is that readers were not interested in writings of this quality, and that local lending-libraries therefore stocked their shelves almost exclusively with Gothic novels of various kinds. Occasionally, too, the author lets his enthusiasm for the hero of his biography run away with him. Kleist is indeed a great and original writer; but it does his cause little service to claim, for instance, that the "utterly unexpected and purely psychogenetic death" of his *Penthesilea* constitutes "a conception unprecedented in world literature". Shakespeare, for one, had been there before: one need think only of Enobarbus's last monologue and death in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Finally, there are occasions when the book takes for granted information that even specialists in German literature may not possess. What is the use of telling us of Kleist's connections with "the Technical Deputation" if we are not told what that "deputation" was, or of quoting a sentence which begins "But just as when two lines meet on one side of a point and suddenly, after passing through infinity, emerge on the other side . . ." without elucidating the unfamiliar mathematical concept which can alone make us visualize Kleist's image and assess its significance?

In the passage just quoted, the translator has served both his authors well. Often, however, what Kleist in fact says is distorted by Ralph Manheim's versions. Several times, for instance, he needlessly removes the characteristic "as if" constructions by means of which Kleist conveys the difficulty of speaking accurately of one's experiences: "wie an einem Abgrund" becomes "on a precipice", "wie befügelt" becomes "winged", and so on. In a verse translation he translates "Rab" as "culture", although "raven" or "corvie" would have done just as well from the point of view of metre and assonance. By translating "wenn" as "though" he ironies out one of his author's most characteristic paradoxes: "eine Habe, die nichts wert ist, wenn sie uns etwas wert ist", becomes, feebly, "it is a worthless possession though it has worth for us" (my italics). He substitutes one physical action for another, translating "wälze ich mich vor Freude" as "gurgling with joy". He misrepresents the editorial policy of Kleist's journal *Phöbus* when he makes its editors say: "we shall suffer no unarmed or tightly armed antagonist to confront us in the arena we are here opening"; what the German original means is that the editors will be rigorous in their choice of contributors (fellow combatants) rather than that of *amateurs*. When Kleist calls Napoleon and his armies "der allgemeine Wolf", he means to say that this is a wolf who menaces everybody, not a "common wolf". When he calls his sister Ulrike "mein grosses Mädchen", he surely conveys that she is a "great-hearted" or "gent of soul"; Manheim's "my big girl", like his earlier "too big for her sex", seems to me to give quite the wrong impression. And there is at least one instance in which Kleist is made to say the very opposite of what he said in fact: when "Nicht jeden Schlag ertragen soll der Mensch" becomes, inexplicably, "A man should have to sustain every blow".

When all reservations have been made, however, it can be said that readers of Maass's book will gain an accurate idea of the life and work of this strange genius, wayward and "misfit" in so many ways, yet also so typically Prussian in the tension between discipline and hysteria, rationalism and fascination by metaphysical lights and dreams.



# Birth of a Republic

D. C. Watt

JOHN H. BACKER  
Winds of History: The German Years of Lucius  
Dubignon Clay  
323pp. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.  
£22.95.  
0442213824

General Lucius D. Clay ranks with Douglas MacArthur as one of the two American soldiers to make the improbable transition from soldier and military governor to the nearest America has ever offered to the position of Viceroy. He began as a three-star deputy for military government to General Eisenhower, in March 1945. Four years later he finally won his retirement, having presided over the establishment of the West German Federal Republic and seen the Soviet blockade of Berlin lifted. He never achieved his heart's desire, to command American forces in action. But in the peculiar circumstances and shifting political sands of the years 1945-49, when he held one of the most important policy-making posts in the United States system, but held it 4,000 miles away from the bureaucratic and court in-fighting by which American policy evolved in these years, he developed a capacity for political judgment and, still more, a political staying-power which was very largely an outgrowth of his personality and the reputation he established for political integrity.

John H. Backer, now a recognized historian of the American occupation of Germany, was a senior figure on the economic division of United States military government and spent much of his subsequent career in the Foreign Service. He writes as a patriot and an admirer of Clay, warts and all – not as an unquestioning patriot, nor as a naive one. His patriotism is exposed more in his monocular stance and in his failure to see anything but the American side of his story. The British and the French figure as obstacles to the proper operation of his hero's policy. General Sir Brian Robertson, Clay's opposite number, becomes a stock figure out of an American comedy, the bumbling – blimpish – British soldier, stumbling through life with a few clichés and a very considerable detachment from reality, a caricature of the real man whose administrative ability as a soldier was at least the equal of Clay's and whose experience was considerably greater. That he was not a man of Clay's calibre was in part due to the integrated nature of British policy-making and the close rein that was held

on him by the Foreign Office.

Clay, by contrast, enjoyed the freedom and the possibility of initiative that he did, simply because of the divisions and confusions that existed between American policy-makers and the ineluctable realities of the German situation, which would not go away. Nor does the emerging political leadership of the Federal Republic stand up much better; spear-carriers and crowd extras in their role, save for the Socialist leader, Kurt Schumacher, depicted here as a fanatical, strong-minded opponent, of admitted integrity, to all Clay's plans for the establishment of a Federal West German state. Clay's views of the new Germany fitted exactly the bourgeois, business-oriented, particularist, city-based ethos of the new German conservatism from Adenauer downwards. This was hardly surprising since this was exactly the part of society with which Clay had most to do in the United States, and it was in this milieu that he was to implant himself on retirement.

It is important in understanding Clay's success, as it is with the much greater success of General Marshall, to give due weight to the excellent relations established in the 1930s and maintained through the 1940s between those responsible for the logistical staff and budgetary aspects of the Army and the appropriate Committees of both houses of Congress. Marshall's great strength was the reputation that he had built up with Congress throughout the 1930s for being a reasonable man who spoke the truth and was of demonstrable integrity. When he became Roosevelt's Chief of Army Staff in 1940 his appointment enormously strengthened Roosevelt's standing with Congress, notoriously one of his less happy areas of activity. In much the same way Clay, whose very rapid promotion had followed that of Marshall, had already spent four years working closely with Congress, when working as principal liaison officer with Congress for the rivers and harbours section of the Chief of Engineers. During the war years he had built up a reputation for single-minded drive that verged on the authoritarian in his insistence on matching war production with military need. In the course of his work he had left a long trail of bruised toes and injured feelings among fellow officers, prominent and senior industrialists and Congress alike; but none had ever impugned his integrity or ability. And he had certainly learned how to make the military and bureaucratic machinery of Washington work for him.

In the beginning his principal difficulties

were the vagueness and inadequacy of his instructions (a consequence of the spanner thrown by the Morgenthau plan into the preparation of a policy for defeated Germany), and the question whether military government was an activity which should be *sui generis* and independent, or subjected to military commanders in the field. Clay, who held to the view that military government should give way to civilian political government as soon as possible, was determined to make this separation a reality from as near the beginning as possible. In the meantime the job of military government was to supervise civilian German authorities, not to govern Germany itself. Clay came to Germany with a second very strong conclusion, that it was his job to make Four Power co-operation in the Allied Military Government of Germany reality. He had, in Backer's words, "a missionary commitment to the Rooseveltian conception of a single post-war world".

He began with a series of rigid and damaging orders: de-industrialization, de-Nazification at all levels, non-fraternization. Democratization and decentralization were also part of his brief. Much of this brief was unworkable; other parts resulted in the replacement of Nazi administrators by an equally authoritarian technocratic elite whose non-Nazi record resulted from social antipathy towards the Nazi *arrivistes* or opposition to Nazi centralism as anti-Christian, and who felt themselves well able to distinguish between the convinced Nazi and the *Mitläufer* who had joined the party for professional reasons. Clay found himself harried by the US press for not having carried de-Nazification far enough while at the same time being unable to produce cadres of local administrators, professional men and technocrats adequate to the demands of getting Germany going again. The result was the Draconian Law 8, which proved in practice impossible to operate, producing, in the words of Clay's own officers, "bitterness and despair" among the vast mass of German managers, administrators and entrepreneurs at all levels. Clay's own comment is revealing: "the quickest way to get a bad order changed, is to carry it out vigorously".

At that point Clay began to concern himself with the future of Germany. He acted in response to an outright bid by the Soviet leadership for the support of a united and unified Germany. The proposal for a union of the British and American zones voiced by Byrnes, the US Secretary of State, at Stuttgart in

September 1946 was Clay's proposal originally, as was the establishment of constitutions for the three *Länder* under German occupation. He was, however, to follow the course of attempting to make quadripartite control of Germany work until either the Soviets made it impossible, or his superiors forbade it. Whoever's moves on the American side contributed to the onset of the Cold War, Clay's, on the evidence presented here, were not among them. The new anti-Soviet line of 1947 came from Truman and the State Department, faced with the right-wing Congress produced by the 1946 mid-term elections. Byrnes resigned, John Foster Dulles, widely tipped as the next Secretary of State if the Republicans should, as expected, win the 1948 elections, appeared as adviser to the new Secretary of State, General Marshall.

To Marshall, Clay appeared a victim of "localitis". At the Moscow foreign ministers' conference in March 1947 he was snubbed and silenced by Dulles. The experience made him Germany's best advocate in Allied councils, convinced as he was that the State Department would "lose" Germany in their rush to conciliate Britain and France. It was this position that he was to occupy for the rest of his term in Germany: a determined opponent of the socialization or internationalization of the Ruhr; a Southern "States Righter" who favoured corporate rather than centralist solutions to the problems of establishing a Federal German State; the principal spokesman for German economic recovery in the division of Marshall Aid. Federal Germany has much to thank him for. The French called him "Clay d'Orsay"; British observers commented that "he looks like a Roman emperor and behaves like one". The State Department commented resignedly on the need "to make a Treaty with our general" before they went into an international conference.

Clay succeeded in leaving his mark by virtue of his efficiency, his "orneriness" and his ultimate understanding of the role of a soldier in a democracy, always keeping before him the possibility of resignation if he is asked to do what he considers unwise or against his conscience. In the end he resigned; but by then his work was done. Federal Germany was as much his creation as it was Adenauer's. John H. Backer has given him a remarkable biography. Whether it is history or not is for others who know the British, French, or German Socialist sides of the story to say. And that story still remains to be written.

# The Washington way

J. K. L. Walker

ROBERT MARTIN  
Gilbert: A Comedy of Manners  
339pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.  
0241111579

Following her introduction to modern American etiquette, *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behaviour* (reviewed in the TLS of October 21, 1983), Judith Martin has, with commendable promptness, delivered a further essay, in the form of a first novel, on certain aspects of East Coast behaviour. *Gilbert* is constructed in the form of a novella whose two panels, Harvard in the late 1950s and Washington some twenty years later, depict the creation – largely by his own hand – and the flowering of Gilbert Fairchild, son of a New York accountant occupied in calculating "low taxes on high incomes". As a student, Gilbert gradually gets his act together: pure selfishness honourably displayed, intellectual cunning, rudeness to women, the poverty card generously played. In his shabby rooming-house in an unfashionable part of Cambridge he steals his cat's milk and his neighbours' newspapers and mops up his girls after love-making with a sweater that is, like the sheets, long unwashed. Billowy Margery yields, temporarily, to willowy Erna, "everything screaming Connecticut" despite her Minneapolis background, who introduces Gilbert to Washington where she has a vacation job in the office of a Senator Talbot. Cool French-Canadian Liane, with whom Erna shares the Georgetown house, looks like a ballerina but works as social secretary at an African embassy when not threatening the career of middle-aged, middle-grade George Beaumont from the State Department where mistresses, like brown shoes, are unacceptable. France and Britain, Liane teaches Gilbert, head the embassy pecking-order (ah, those dear, dead Eisenhower days).

Washington, Gilbert decides, is where his future lies; not, of course, as an elected representative, which would entail keeping a straight face, but as a part-creator of the people's choice. Blinking only slightly after contemplating Liane's Ambassador, a former Oxford don, on his command of English, Gilbert hurries back to Harvard to turn out papers on "The Metaphor in the Public Utterances of Vice-President Nixon" and, unsuccessfully, to draw back Margery from a former room-mate

Buddy Loomis after the psychological sessions have got out of hand. Governor Groton, innocently pausing in Harvard to charm the nation's future leaders, finds himself chosen as a ladder, and reluctantly allows Gilbert to set foot on him.

Act Two opens in Washington towards the end of the 1970s with a now fortyish Gilbert installed as Special Adviser to the new President, whom he has nursed to his present eminence over the past fifteen years. After the inaugural junketings business is slack as everyone considers what to do next. Socially, Gilbert and Wanda, his new young wife, are ahead of the pack with their expensively re-Victorianized house in Kalamazoo Triangle, equipped with the chic detritus of the Oxfam export department, and in a block that has had its own murder. Erna, with her Foreign Service husband in Kabul, her pale lipstick, little leather skirts and worldwide ethnicity, has long since been lapped but is allowed to put up the money to open a boutique with Wanda, who has been "lucky enough to be born with style and nerve". Other Harvard faces from the past reappear in instant refutation of their legends: Buddy Loomis, anxiously soliciting support for his panacea of Positive Growth – "just a simple technique of making life work" – and accompanied by Margery's successor Immaculata, "one of those pliant substitutes for wives whom American servicemen acquire abroad at PXs"; Margery herself, now a powerful New York doctor and advocate for the disabled. Gilbert fails to seduce her but ends up embracing her principles instead, thus at last finding something for the White House to do.

Gilbert's discovery of virtue is, of course, a disappointment, but that is in the nature of the genre. He has tried evil, but only "a moderate amount in a gentlemanly way" and has "never liked it for its own sake", so Ms Martin in the end lets him off the hook – with due acknowledgment to the stimulus his unabashed selfishness has afforded his Harvard contemporaries throughout their lives. She writes with a fine dry wit and has an acute but indulgent eye for the excesses of fashionable Washington life. For this she may be forgiven some *longueurs*; like her hero, she doesn't seem quite sure what to do once she is inside the White House, despite an intimate knowledge of its topography; nor are her characters all that engaging. Still, though the plot may creak the furniture throws off a good rich Early American sheen.

# Greying among the greens

Joy Grant

TERESA WAUGH  
Painting Water  
190pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.  
0241111595

In this, her first novel, Teresa Waugh (daughter-in-law of Evelyn) offers an unsensational chronicle of middle class family life in Surrey; she follows the contrasting fortunes of two sisters from adolescence to middle age – in the case of one, to her death.

Pain, studious Marjorie prefers "independence" (teaching classics in a girls' school) to any further exploration of feelings roused in her at the age of twenty-seven by an Italian waiter's kiss. Pretty Alice makes an early marriage with a thoroughly decent, thoroughly dull man who gives her three children and a lifetime of happiness. Every moment spared from his state agency Dick spends among his fruit and vegetables, which admiring Alice bottles or, come the late 1960s, prepares for the deep freeze, at times her life seems a cheerful race against his over-abundant greens. Eventually Alice notices herself (superfluously, one may think) whether her happy existence – and whether indeed her talented artist son's enthusiasm for painting water – have been simply a matter of having got bored and killing time. She gets a duly angry answer.

By date-labelling her chapters, Teresa Waugh neatly clarifies her chronology, and draws attention to some of the shifts in manner and theme that occurred between 1944

and 1982. (For Alice, the most alarming moment in a sedate marriage comes in 1967, when a male friend, whom she suspects is homosexual, tells her he loves her. By contrast, her free-wheeling daughter shacks up with an "awful" left-wing photographer who persuades her to abort their child.) Credible enough characters and plausible enough incidents fill the canvas, but they are too lightly sketched in. Teresa Waugh is at her best when she focuses on significant minutiae, like a middle-class dinner-party menu of 1960 that includes "Nescatelli served in the drawing room". Also nicely observed is a youngish but greying adman, vintage 1973, who sports "tight jeans and dark red espadrilles . . . a pink and white striped shirt unbuttoned to half way down his chest and, knotted around his neck, a red and purple Indian silk scarf".

Too often, however, *Painting Water* reads less like a finished novel than a promising draft: the language is over-simple, unadorned; glimmers of satire wit beg for further development – it is not enough to say that the clarinet master (at a girls' school function) made a dirty joke, we want to know what it was; the various backgrounds wait to be filled in. A split second's comparison with the sharpest, most finished work in this genre (Barbara Pym's superb account of the totally humdrum, or Elizabeth Taylor's ironic depiction of Home Counties' domesticity, for instance) places *Painting Water* accurately; like the older one served in the second chapter, it is a pleasing mixture, but innocuous and too mild in flavour.

# Life after Harry

Linda Taylor

PATRICIA WENDORF  
Leo Days  
165pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.  
024111134X

When Ruth's husband, Harry Flemming, leaves her, she tries to recollect what she calls the Leo Days – "the lazy days of hot, bright sunlight". It's a displacement activity and she is good at it; her marriage has been a dull disaster. Similarly, in the last few years, middle-class Ruth has been occupied as a volunteer in an inner city organization called Mainstay, which attempts to sort out social problems.

The time is 1980-81; the city, it is implied, Liverpool; the area where Mainstay operates, and where Ruth decides to live, the racially various (and tense) St Joseph's. The district's problems are the stuff of social workers' reports: stealing, drink, prostitution, suicide, wife-battering, squatting, Paki-bashing, old age. With the departure of Harry, and the family business in the hands of the receiver, Ruth's cocooned life crumbles (though she does have a small annuity).

She finds her own difficulties paralleling those of the residents of St Joseph's. Handsome, boring, hypochondriac Harry is rapidly supplanted by angular, brusque, tough Detective Sergeant McInnes. At forty, Ruth learns how to fight – also that aggression can be exciting, that being a fallen woman (she conceives McInnes's child and refuses to marry him) has the compensations, as well as the drawbacks, of risky, solitary survival.

Realism rules in Patricia Wendorf's second novel; the structure is simple: five parts, five seasons. There's the discontent of Winter, the

energy of Spring, the lust of Summer, the estrangement of Autumn and another Winter, and Leo Days with baby. The narrative is pegged to the juxtaposition of Ruth's and her clients' problems. She recognizes the power of authority (the power that she has as a Mainstay lady), for example, during an interview with her bank manager and when questioned by McInnes's boys after the ignominious death of the gypsy prostitute, Della Smith.

Wendorf is at her best with detail and atmosphere: the empty spaces left in the Flemmings' house by Harry's reclaimed possessions, the simplicity of Ruth's decorations in her two-up, two-down St Joseph's cottage – "against which she might hang her new freedom". When it comes to character, however, she is less convincing. Ruth's gawky middle-classness works to an extent, but the people of St Joseph's, with their vaguely vernacular talk, their stereotyped problems, lack definition. They are folksy rather than real.

While Wendorf can evoke a climate of feeling, her dialogue, too often, is flat. When McInnes and Ruth have their final confrontation, for instance, "the skin around his lips and nose had whitened, and she moved rapidly to place the width of the table between them"; the tension is felt. But then they talk, and the scene's resonance is lost with Ruth making statements like this: "Running away will solve nothing. We should still be the same two people. There's work to be done. We are needed, McInnes" – and with McInnes feebly replying, "So what in hell do you want? . . . I've been beating my brains out lately, wondering how I can please you." Wendorf's characters habitually make these kinds of wooden speeches to each other; and, in a novel so concerned with realism, that is a considerable failing.

# Ruffles and truffles

Lindsay Duguid

M. F. K. FISHER  
Not Now But Now  
264pp. Chatto and Windus. £8.95 (paperback, £3.95).  
0701127643

M. F. K. Fisher, who has for many years contributed a highly-regarded cookery column to the *New York Times*, specializes in that self-consciously ornate prose style which has often found a place in the pages of the *New Yorker*. Her first novel, originally published in 1947, is very much the sort of concoction you might expect from the author of *Consider the Oyster* and *The Gastronomical Me*.

The novel describes the time-travel of a vindictive and slutish heroine, Jennie, who is distinguished by her liking for trains and her irresistible attraction for both men and women. Not much else distinguishes her – if you discount the proud high breasts and the tiny slippers – nor does she appear to change much with her surroundings as we meet her in "present-day" California, Switzerland in 1938, London in 1847, Chicago in 1927 and San Francisco in 1882. She enslaves variously an old man, a young man, a middle-aged woman and a young girl and in each case, having ruined someone's life, she flits mysteriously away, leaving the tedious admirers behind: "She breathed carefully, like a woman who has nearly died, and the fine familiar scorn of all the world flowed with nourishment and comfort through her once again, and the old excitement. She was Jennie. She was free out of the pool of words. She would be gone. . . ."

The author's carelessness about the laws of relativity, betokened by the rows of dots which end the chapters, is in direct contrast to her concern over the finer points of household appointments, soft furnishings, clothes, food and wine: "Dinner was delightful. There were long white filets of a local sole. There were grilled truffles from Sir Harry's farm in southern France", and so on until the bowl of hot-house strawberries. Even in the least *New Yorker* section – describing Jennie's adventures below stairs in a Victorian household – the detail is devoted to *mousse au chocolat* and a *canezou* of pale green organza.

T. J. Binyon

# By hulk to Palestine

A. J. Sherman

WILLIAM R. PERL  
Operation Action: Rescue from the Holocaust  
442pp. New York: Ungar. \$16.95. (paperback, \$9.95).  
0804417253

Intensely partisan, often bitter, this personal account of the author's role in the migration of Jewish refugees to Palestine in the years 1938-42 is a revised and expanded edition of his *The Four-Front War* (1979). It records a dramatic story of relentless pressure from the Nazis, a silent war with British intelligence agents, clandestine negotiations in a shadowy Balkan underworld of shipping brokers, corrupt officials and dubious maritime crews, all conducted under siege by hordes of desperate people whose frantic escape efforts intensified as "the ran out". It is a narrative of ultimate failure: despite ingenuity, ruse and counter-ruse, adroit escapes, desperate bravery and appalling suffering, only a fortunate few, mere thousands from among millions of Jews who faced doom on a sealed continent, found refuge in Palestine or elsewhere.

William R. Perl's memoir begins in Vienna after the *Anschluss* and the subsequent establishment – under an ambitious junior officer, Adolf Eichmann – of the Gestapo's Central Office for Jewish Emigration, which turned with increasing urgency to Perl's organization for assistance in effecting Jews more rapidly from the expanded Reich. That organization was the emigration bureau of the New Zionist

Organization, the Revisionists; their militant and well-disciplined youth cadres, trained for agriculture in a future Jewish state they envisaged on both banks of the Jordan, acknowledged only the leadership of Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky, and were as contemptuous of the Jewish establishment in Europe as they were of the British authorities in Palestine or in London. Perl himself is capable of a chilling reference to Dairzig Jews as "older, undisciplined people with no ideological background. They were just refugees running for their lives".

The Revisionists, driven by a sense of urgency initially not shared by other Jewish groups, and unencumbered by the political and diplomatic obligations that dictated caution to official Jewish leadership, set out to organize mass transports of Jews bound for Palestine, not just from the Reich but from Poland, Romania and Hungary too; all these countries were as eager to dispose of their "surplus" Jewish population as was Germany. In this enterprise, the Revisionists were bound to collide with the British Government, which in May 1939 had issued a White Paper severely limiting Jewish entry to Palestine. The trickle of illegal Jewish immigration that had gone on since 1934 had by then widened to a flood. Despite counter-measures, including intense diplomatic pressures, naval patrols and police arrests, the Government of Palestine found it impossible to staunch the flow. Only the advancing Nazi troops, the sealing of European frontiers, and a shift in German policy from expulsion to extermination finally ended the refugee movement.

The clandestine war within the larger war waged by militant Jewish groups against the

Nazis, the British, the weather and the official Jewish establishment was a grossly unequal struggle. The militants bought decrepit hulks with smuggled funds, supplied them with improbable flags of convenience, and manned them with crews of doubtful competence and sometimes criminal pasts. With the connivance or active assistance of officials, mostly bribed, sealed trains brought Jews from the Reich, Poland, Romania and Hungary to Black Sea and Adriatic ports, where they were loaded, with no regard for health or safety regulations, on board the wretched vessels and launched into the Mediterranean. The refugees then attempted to evade British coastal patrols off Palestine. They bore passports with visas for improbable destinations such as Liberia, China or Panama, and would jettison their papers before the final run on to the beaches, so that it would be impossible to deport them if they were captured.

Perl describes in detail the planning, negotiations, and intrigues which often led to harrowing voyages under conditions one British diplomat described in despatches as "reminiscent of the slave trade". The experience of individual vessels ranged from almost uneventful landings on deserted parts of the Palestine coast to the horrifying fate of the "Struma", an unseaworthy converted yacht of 240 tons, which after agonizing months of wandering, blew up in the Black Sea with 769 passengers aboard: there was one survivor. Perl lays the blame for this and other tragedies squarely on the hostility of the British authorities; and indeed asserts that the intelligence services, aided by diplomatic representatives, "manoeuvred most actively to have those refugees

murdered by the Nazis rather than to allow them to reach the only available haven, Palestine". Despite selective quotation from British Government documents, Dr Perl does not establish this claim. Nor does his discussion of the "Darien II" affair, in which a Hagana team, acting under the orders of the Jewish Agency, collaborated with British security services in a sabotage plan to block the Danube, amount to proof of a conspiracy between the Jewish Agency and the British Government. His scrutiny of the documents at the Public Record Office might have revealed that there were some British officials – notably Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen, Ambassador to Turkey – who did not partake of the depressingly general mean-spiritedness, lack of imagination, and outright hostility displayed by so many of their colleagues.

A useful corrective to Perl's account of the "Darien II" and other episodes is Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945*, (1979), of which Perl appears to be unaware. Wasserstein's meticulous analysis of official sources reveals a lamentable record of indifference, complacency, lack of compassion – but not conscious and eager collaboration in Hitler's plans for the "Final Solution". Scantly documented and tendentious though it is, Dr Perl's memoir is none the less valuable, not merely as a memoir of personal bravery under appalling pressures, but also for the light it sheds on aspects of European Jewish psychology. *Operation Action* goes far to explain the shape the ideology and emotional universe of such figures as Menachem Begin, who has supplied the book with a foreword.



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